A

DISCOURSE

Wherein is held forth

The Oppoſition of the DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, and PRACTICES OF THE

Roman Church,

To the NATURE, DESIGNS, and CHARACTERS of the Chriſtian Faith.

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LONDON;
Printed for J. Watts, at the Angel in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, MDCLXXXVIII.

Of the Doctrine, Worſhip, *and* Practices *of the* Roman Church, *&c.*

HE *that increaſeth Knowledg, increaſeth Sorrow*, is an Obſervation which holdeth true of no part of Knowledg, ſo much as of the Knowledg of Mankind: It is ſome relief to him, who knows nothing of foreign Wickedneſs, to hope there are other Nations wherein Vertue is honoured, and Religion is in eſteem, which allays his Regrates, when he ſees Vice and Impiety abound in his Country; but if by travelling or reading, he enlarge his Horizon, and know Mankind better, his Regrates will grow, when he finds the whole World lies in Wickedneſs. It argues a cruel and inhumane Temper, to delight in beholding Scenes of Horror and Miſery; and certainly none, who either honours his Maker and Redeemer, or is a lover of Mankind, can without ſorrow look on, and ſee the Indignities done to God and his Son Chriſt, and ſee the Enemy of the humane Race triumphing over the World, with ſuch abſolute Authority, and ſo much enraged Cruelty; and that not only in the dark Regions of it, which the Sun of Righteouſneſs hath not yet viſited with his Goſpel, but that where Chriſt ſhould have a Throne, Satans Seat ſhould alſo be, is juſtly ſurpriſing and aſtoniſhng. That almoſt all Chriſtendom hath fallen from their firſt Love, is what none whoſe Eyes are open can deny; and it is little leſs evident, that the greater part of it hath made ſhipwrack, and erred from the Faith; and that the Church, whoſe *Faith was once ſpoken of throughout the World*, is now become the *Mother of the Fornications of the Earth*. It is true, the Scriptures warned us of a *falling away*, of a *Myſtery of Iniquity*, of an *Antichriſt to be revealed in due time*, and of a *Babyloniſh Rome, which ſhould bewitch the Earth with her Sorceries*, but ſhould be varniſhed over with fair Colours and ſpecious Pretences, ſo that *Myſtery* ſhould be on her Forehead: Being then warned of ſo much danger

ger to the Chriſtian Religion, it is a neceſſary (though painful) enquiry to ſee if this *Antichriſt* be yet come, or if we muſt look for another.

But becauſe ſome have ſtretched the Notion of Antichriſtianiſm ſo far, that things harmeleſs and innocent come within its compaſs; and others have ſo much contracted it, that they might ſcape free; we are to take a view of the Nature and Deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion, and to conclude from that what muſt be Antichriſtianiſm: It being not only a bare contradiction to ſome branches or parts of the Goſpel (for then every Error or Hereſy were Antichriſtianiſm) but a Deſign and entire Complex, of ſuch Opinions and Practices, as are contradictory to, and ſubverſive of the Power and Life of Chriſtianity: And if we find any ſuch thing to be broached and received in the World, we may, with the leaſt hazard of uncharitableneſs, pronounce it be Antichriſtianiſm; and if it be acted or animated by any Head, he may be concluded Antichriſt.

The Deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion run betwixt theſe four Heads: The firſt is, to give us right apprehenſions of the Nature and Attributes of God, that we may conceive aright of him, and adore him ſutably to his Nature, and according to his Will, and thereby be admitted to a free converſe with him, and become partakers of the Divine Nature. How little of God was known by the twinkling's of Nature's Light, even to the better and wiſer part of the World, *Tully*'s Books of the Nature of the Gods do ſufficiently inform us? But if the Philoſophers were ſo much to ſeek in it, what ſhall we expect from the Vulgar? And indeed *Homer*'s *Iliads*, and *Ovid*'s *Metamorphoſis*, were wretched Syſtems of Divinity; and yet ſuch, and ſuch-like, were the Sentiments of the Nations about the Godhead. It is true, the *Seed of Abraham* were delivered from that Darkneſs, and knew God by his Name *Jehovah*, and had Laws and Ordinances given them by God; yet their Worſhip was ſo carnal, and did ſo ſtrike upon, and affect the Senſes, that we will be ſoon ſatisfied, it was not ſo ſublime and free as became the Spirituality of the Divine Nature, and ſo was only fitted for the Infancy of the People of God; but by Chriſt *the Myſtery that lay hid from Ages and Generations, was revealed; for he declared the Father, and revealed him*, and taught us to *renounce Idols and Vanities, and to ſerve the living God, commanding all Men every where to repent; the Times of Ignorance wherein*

God

God winked at Idolatry, being then over. That ſo Mankind being *God's Off-ſpring, might feel after him*, and not worſhip him any more in the blinding groſſneſs of Idolatry, but in a pure ſpiritual manner; and whereas *the Law came by Moſes, by Chriſt came Grace and Truth.* Grace, in oppoſition to the Severity of the Law; and Truth, as oppoſed (not to Falſhood) but to the Figures and Shadows of *Moſes* his Law; and therefore God is to be worſhipped in Spirit and Truth, in oppoſition to the Carnal Ordinances, and Typical Rites, which ſhadowed out the Truth in the Law.

The ſecond Branch of the Chriſtian Religion is, to hold forth the Method of Man's Reconciliation with his Maker. For the Senſe of all Mankind agrees in this, that Sin is an Indignity done God, which deſerveth Puniſhment, and cannot be expiated by any Service Man can do: It was therefore neceſſary there ſhould be a mean found for incouraging Sinners to imbrace a Religious Life; of which all had reaſon to deſpair, without Pardon were offered to Penitents, upon the change of their Lives. Now this was that the Heathen could not dream how to procure: It is true, the Jews had Sacrifices for expiating of Sin, but theſe could never quiet their Conſciences, ſince the common Senſe of Mankind tells, that the Blood of Beaſts cannot appeaſe God. The Myſtery therefore of the Reconciliation of Sinners to God, is the proper Character of the Chriſtian Religion: which holds forth to us how the *Eternal Word* was made Man, and endured unſpeakable Sufferings for the Sins of Men, even to the Death of the Croſs; and was raiſed up by God, and carried to Heaven, where he is veſted with all Power and Authority, and by the Merits of his Death hath a right to grant Pardon, give Grace, and confer Eternal Life on all that believe on him; by whom God conveys all things to us, and through whom we are to offer up all our Worſhip to God, he being the *Mediator betwixt God and Man.*

The third Head of the Chriſtian Religion is, to teach the perfecteſt, cleareſt, and moſt Divine Rules, for advancing of the Souls of Men to the higheſt perfection of their Natures. It is true, noble pieces of Morality were acknowledged and taught by the Heathen Philoſophers: and the Books of the Old Teſtament have the Doctrine of Vertue, Purity, Humility and Meekneſs laid open very fully: but without derogating from theſe, it muſt be acknowledged, that as the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, teacheth all theſe Precepts with clearer Rules, and fuller Directions;

rections; ſo they were in it recommended by the example of its Author, backed with the ſtrongeſt Motives, and enforced with the greateſt Arguments. In theſe are the Leſſons of Purity, Chaſtity, Ingenuity, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, and Generoſity; ſo clearly laid down, and ſo fully evinced, that no Man, who is ſo much a Man as to love theſe things whereby his Mind may be improved, to all that is truely great and noble, but muſt be enamoured of the Chriſtian Religion, as ſoon as he is taught it.

The fourth Deſign of Religion is, to unite Mankind in the cloſeſt Bonds of Peace, Friendſhip, and Charity, which it doth not only by the Rules preſcribed for the tempering our Paſſions, forgiving of Injuries, and loving our Enemies, and by the Doctrin of Obedience to thoſe in Authority over us, but likewiſe by aſſociating us into one Body, called the *Church*, wherein we are to worſhip God jointly, and to be coupled in one by the uſe of the Sacraments, which are the Ligaments of the Body.

Having thus viewed the great deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion in the ſeveral Branches and Parts thereof, I ſhall add to this, the main diſtinguiſhing *Characters* of our Religion, which are alſo four.

The firſt its, *its verity*; that it is not founded on the tattles of Perſons concerned, nor on the reveries of Dotards, nor received with a blind credulity, being founded on the Authority of the great God, which appeared viſibly in thoſe that publiſhed it, chiefly in the Perſon of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who by his Miracles that were wrought in the ſight of all the People, even his Enemies looking on, and not being able to deny them; but chiefly by his Reſurrection from the Dead, was declared to be the Son of God, which was ſeen and known by many, who followed not cunningly deviſed Fables, but were the Eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty, who went in his Name, and publiſhed it to the World, confirming it by Miracles and mighty Wonders, atteſting it, notwithſtanding of all the Perſecutions they met with, moſt of them confirming it with their Blood: And this Doctrine was received and believed by the better part of Mankind, though it being contrary to all the Intereſts of the fleſh, whoſe mortification it teacheth, its reception cannot be imputed to credulity or intereſt.

The ſecond *Character* of our Religion is, its *genuine ſimplicity* and *perſpicuity*, that all its Doctrines and Rules are clearly and diſtinctly

diſtinctly held out to us, not like the Heathen Divinity, much whereof lay in dark *Oracles* in the Books of the *Sybils*, and in other pretended *Myſteries*, which none but the Prieſts might handle and expound. The *Jewiſh Religion* was alſo vailed with Types and Figures, ſo that it was not eaſie to ſee the Subſtance and Truth through all theſe foldings and ſhadows. But the Glory of the *Chriſtian Religion*, as to this particular, is nobly laid out by St. *Paul*, in theſe words, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face, as in a glaſs, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The third *Character* is, *the Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion*, it containing none of theſe abſurd incredible things, which abounded among the Heathens; nor of theſe Rites of Judaiſm, the Reaſons whereof, beſides the Will of God in enjoyning them, could not be aſſigned; but both the Doctrines and Precepts of the Chriſtian Religion are fitted for Mankind, and ſo congenial to his Nature, that they well deſerve the deſignation of *reaſonable Service*, or rational Worſhip, God having made our Souls and them of a piece.

And the fourth *Character* of our Religion is, *its eaſineſs*; *Chriſt's Yoke is eaſy, and his Burden light*, *Mat.* 11. 30. Wherein we are freed from all the barbarous and cruel Rites of *Gentiliſm*, and from the oppreſſive Bondage of *Judaiſm*, *which was a Law of Ordinances*, and *a Yoke that our Fathers were not able to bear*; but that we are called to by Chriſt, is ſo ſimple, ſo eaſy, and ſo plain, that well may we ſay, *his Commandments are not grievous*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 3.

Having given this hint of the Deſign and Characters of the Chriſtian Religion, I hold it not neceſſary to dwell on a further deduction of thoſe Generals into more particular Branches, nor to make this *Scheme* of Religion good by any longer Proof, the Poſition I have laid down, being ſo obvious to the Reaſon of every conſidering Perſon; wherefore I go on to examine if there be any ſuch *Syſtem* of Doctrins or Opinions, among Pretenders to Chriſtianity, which tends to the overthrowing and enervating of this whole Deſign, and whoſe Characters are directly oppoſite to theſe I have mentioned; and the leſs avowed, and the more diſguiſed that Society be, as it is more likely to prevail, ſince Error and Vice are not ſo formidable in their own colours, as when

vailed with the pretences of Truth and Vertue, ſo it will better agree with that great Character the Prophecies give of this defection, that it was a *Myſtery, and had Myſtery on its Fore-head*, Rev. 17. 15.

And here remains the ſad part of my Diſcourſe, for what lover of Mankind can with pleaſure either ſatisfy his own Reaſon, or convince the Judgment of others, in a Matter the iſſue whereof is to prove ſo great a part of the Chriſtian Societies to be *Antichriſtian* and adulterate; and certainly if my love to Truth, and the honour of my Redeemer and his Goſpel, and by conſequence a zeal for Souls, did not engage me to this Search, I could eaſily quit the Task, and chuſe more eaſy and pleaſant Subjects for the exerciſe of my Thoughts; but the Wiſdom of God having declared it a part of Wiſdom to obſerve the Characters of the *Antichriſtian Beaſt*, I therefore, though not without pain, engage in the ſurvey of it.

And firſt, in the entry it will be a bad Omen, of no good to be expected from any Society that ſhall ſtudy to keep her Members in Ignorance, and to bar them the ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures, which being the Revelation of the whole Counſel of God, and written by plain and ſimple Men, and at firſt directed to the uſe of the rude illiterate Vulgar, for teaching them the Myſteries of Godlineſs, and the Path of Life; it is a ſhrewd indication, that if any ſtudied to hide this Light under a Candleſtick, and to keep it in an unknown Tongue, or forbid the Body of *Chriſtians* the uſe of it, (though its native tendency be to enlighten the Underſtanding, and to enflame the Will, it being given out by God for that end) that thoſe muſt be conſcious to themſelves of great deformity to that Rule, and apprehend, that if it were more known, their Doctrin would be leſs believed, eſpecially ſince the hardeſt part of the Scriptures are the Writings of the Old Teſtament: And yet theſe were communicated to all of that Diſpenſation, who were commanded by Chriſt to ſearch them, and who did educate their Children in them, continuing that Holy care to a high degree, even to this Day. Now except it be ſaid, that it is fitter all be kept under Darkneſs in the new Diſpenſation, than was in the Old, no account can be given, for the Zeal is uſed in any Church, to keep their Children in ſuch ignorance; and yet this is a part of the diſtinguiſhing Characters of the new Diſpenſation from the Old, that Light hath appeared in it. Now all may

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This Worſhip is alſo contrary to the Divine Precept, who made it one of the Ten Commandments, which himſelf delivered to his People; Exod. 20. 4. *That no graven Image, nor Likeneſs, ſhould be made to be worſhipped.* And the reaſon given, ſhews the Law was perpetual, *for God is ever jealous of the Glory due to him.* Now what kindneſs thoſe of *Rome* have to this Command, may be gueſſed by their ſtriking it out of their Catechiſms, as if it were only an Appendix of the firſt: But if we read the whole Old Teſtament, it will furniſh us with large diſcoveries of God's Diſpleaſure at this kind of Worſhip, to which the *Jews* were ſo inclinable; *but God would not give his Praiſe to graven Images,* Iſa. 42. 8. Now here it is to be remembred, that the Jewiſh Diſpenſation was low and carnal, when compared to that to which we are called: If then this Worſhip was not allowed of to them, it is much leſs to be allowed of among Chriſtians.

Another part of the falſe Worſhip of the Heathens was, that they believed the Deity and Divine Power was by myſtical and magical ways affixed to ſome Bodies, as the Sun or Stars are; or to ſome Temples, and to ſome *Ancilia* and *Palladia,* which they believed came down from Heaven, *Acts* 19. 35. to which they held God to be preſent and adherent, and therefore worſhipped them. And of *kin to this was the Iſraelites their worſhipping the Calf in the Wilderneſs,* Exod. 32. for it is clear, they looked on it as their God, who had brought them out of *Egypt,* therefore could not poſſibly be adoring the *Egyptian God that was an Ox*; but the Feaſt that was to *Jehovah,* and the *Pſalm* 106. *verſ.* 20. that ſays, *they changed their Glory into the ſimilitude of an Ox,* do ſhew that they worſhipped the True God, though in a falſe manner. Neither is it to be imagined, that *Aaron* the Prophet and Saint of the Lord, though very guilty in this Matter, could for all that be ſo criminal, as to make a falſe God: But the moſt ſatisfying account of his Fault is, that when he ſaw God in the Mount, *Exod.* 24. 10. God appeared in that Figure that was afterwards in the moſt Holy Place, which was to be framed after the Pattern ſeen in the Mount. And if ſo, then God appeared between the Cherubims: now the Figure of a Cherub, was the ſame with that of a Calf in its hinder parts, *Ezek.* 1. 7. And if we compare *verſ.* 10. of that *Chap.* with *Ezek.* 10. 14. what in the firſt place is called *the Face of an Ox,* is in the ſecond called *the Face of a Cherub,*

Cherub, which tells us clearly what was the Figure of the Cherub. And therefore *Aaron* seeing the People desired a sensible Symbol of God's Presence among them, he made choice of that he had seen in the Mount about the Divine Glory; and yet all that did not excuse his Fault in the sight of God.

In like manner, after the Tabernacle and Temple were set up, wherein were the Cherubims, when *Jeroboam* revolted, *he set up Calves*, 1 King. 12. 28, 29. as is probable upon the same account, but no doubt continued in all Points the Worship of the True God, as it was at *Jerusalem*, as might be proved from many Particulars; but the Sin wherewith he *made Israel to sin*, was the worshipping of the True God by a false Symbol. The like account is to be given of the Idolatry of *Gideon*'s *Ephod*, Judg. 8. 27. And of the worshipping the *Brazen Serpent*, 2 King. 18. 4. where certainly the True God was adored, and yet the People went a whoring from him in that Worship.

And here the Title of *Whoredom*, given to Idolatry so often in the Old Testament, is to be considered; the importance whereof is, that God by covenanting with his People, is married to them, to be their God; and the conjugal Duty they owe him, is Adoration: When therefore other Creatures have any share of that bestowed on them, spiritual Whoredom is committed.

Now how sad the Application of this to the Christian Church must be, all may judg, who know how great a part of Christendom worship God by Images; and how the adored and incomprehensible Trinity is painted *as an Old Man with a Child in his Arms, and a Dove over the Child's Head*; *tho no Man hath seen the Father at any time*, John 6. 46. And the Son as God, can no more be represented by an Image, than the Father; and the Holy Ghost, though once appearing in the symbolical representation of a Dove, cannot, without Idolatry, be represented and worshipped under that Figure. Neither can any Apology be offered for this, which could not with the same Reason have cleared both Jews and Gentiles of Idolatry. And whatever more abstracted Minds may think of these Images, yet none that considers the simplicity of the Vulgar, the frailty of Man, and his inclination to apprehend all things as sensible, can doubt but that the Rabble do really conceive of God as like these Figures, and do plainly worship them. It is further to be considered, that

though

though the Son of God was Man, yet as Man he is not to be worshipped; and therefore the setting out of Figures and Statues for his Humane Nature (which on the way are no real Adumbrations, but only the Fancies of Painters) and worshipping these as the Images of the Son of God, is no less Idolatry, than to worship the Father as an Old Man.

And further, the Worship of the Mass is Idolatry, as evidently as any piece of *Gentilism* ever was: For if it be certain that Christ is not in the Hostie, which shall be afterwards made out, then to adore him as there, must be Idolatrous. Neither will it serve for excuse, to say, that Christ is truly worshipped as present; and if he be not there, it is only a mistake about the Presence, but no Idolatry can be committed, the Worship being offered to a proper Object, who is God. But if this Apology free them of Idolatry, it will also clear those Heathens, who worshipped some Statues or Creatures, in which they conceived God was present; so that they might have pleaded, it was the Great and True God they adored, believing him there present, as their Fathers had formerly believed. But he were very gentle to Idolaters, who upon such a Plea would clear them of that Crime. What then is to be said of that Church, that holds it the greatest piece of her Religion, to adore the Bread with the same devotion they would pay to Christ, were he visibly present; who call the Bread *God*, carry it about in Processions, and worship it with all the Solemnity imaginable. And finally, the Worship they give the Cross, is likewise an adoring of God under a Symbol and Representation. And thus we have seen the *Parallel of Rome-Heathen, and Rome-Christian*, runs but too too just.

But the next kind of the Heathens Idolatry, was their worshipping of others beside God; whom they held of two ranks: Some that were so pure, that they never dwelt in Bodies: Others they judged to be the Souls of deceased Men, after their Death acknowledged and honoured with Divine Honour. And this kind of Idolatry was first begun at *Babylon*, where *Ninus* made the Statue of his Father *Belus* be set up, and worshipped it: And from him all these lesser Gods were called *Belim*, or *Baalim*. Now concerning these, the *Heathens* believed that they were certain intermedial Powers that went betwixt God and Men, by whom all good things were conveyed to Mortals, by whom also all our Services were offered to the Gods. Thus the Nations had *Gods*

many,

many, and Lords many, 1 Cor. 8. 5. And these lesser *Deities*, or *Dæmons*, they adored, by erecting Statues to them about their burial Places, where they built Temples for them, and worshipped them. And from this Hint of *Babylon*'s being the Mother of this kind of Idolatry, we may guess why the Apostacy of that City, which in St. *John*'s days, *did reign over the Kingdoms of the Earth*, Rev. 17. 18. is shadowed forth under the Name of *Babylon*; to hold out, that the Corruption it was to fall into, was to be of a kind with that begun in *Babylon*; and the Character of the Whore doth likewise agree well with this.

Now if we compare with this the worship of Angels and Saints in the *Roman* Church, we shall find the parity just and exact. For after the Conversion of the *Roman* Empire, it is not to be denied, but that in order to the gaining of the *Heathen* World to a complyance with Christianity, the *Christians* did, as near as was possible, accommodate themselves to the Heathenish Customs: And therefore in stead of their Gods, they set up the *Dæmon* and *Baal-Worship*, to the Apostles and other Saints and Martyrs; which *Theodoret* doth most ingenuously acknowledg to have been set in the stead of their Gods. They became afterwards so exact in the parallel, that as the Heathens had of these lesser Gods for every Nation, so there was a Saint appointed for every Nation: St. *Andrew* for *Scotland*, St. *George* for *England*, St. *Patrick* for *Ireland*, and many more for other Nations: And as every House among the *Heathens* had their houshold God, so every Person was taught to have a *tutelar Saint* and *Angel*. And as among the *Heathen* there were Gods for all Trades, for all Sicknesses, and for every Vertue; so in Antichristianism there were Saints for every Disease, for every Profession, and for all the Graces. And as the *Heathens* built Temples for them, so did also *Babylonish Rome*. And here an odd Remark is in my way of this conformity, that the *Pantheon at* Rome *dedicated in* Augustus *his time to* Cybele *the Mother of the Gods, and to all the Gods, was afterwards consecrated to the Virgin and all the Saints*. And as the *Heathens* offered Prayers, made Vows, observed Days, brought Presents, used Processions in honour to these lesser Gods, and worshipped their Statues and Images; so all this by degrees crept into *Rome-Christian*, as might be branched out in more particulars than the nature of so short a Discourse will allow of. It is true, the Worship of Images came not in before the *eighth Century*; but after that time

time it engaged all that received it into a high degree of madneſs, for advancing that Heatheniſh piece of Worſhip. And ſhall I here tell what is known to all who have ſeen the forms of that Church? how you ſhall find their Churches all over dreſſed up with Images and Statues, gorgeouſly apparelled, and well adorned; where the poor vulgar are lying proſtrate before them, ſaying their Devotions, and perhaps waſhing the feet of their Shrines with their Tears, and with great affection kiſſing the Hem of their Garments: And if through the tricks of the Prieſt, the Image ſeem to nod or ſmile on them, (which is not unfrequent) with what joy do they go away, as if ſome Angel had ſaluted them from Heaven. And here it were too long to reckon up the Abominations of this Saint-worſhip which are offered to the *Virgin*, with the Blaſphemous Titles given her, and Prayers made to her; *as if ſhe were more merciful and gentle to Sinners, than her bleſſed Son. What ſhall I tell of the whole Pſalms turned to her?* The words of *Goddeſs* and *Lady*, being put in the place of *God* and *Lord*: And that from the *eleventh Century*, in which the form of the numbering their Prayers by Beads was begun, *ten go to the Virgin, for one to God.* How many more worſhip her, than do her Son? How many more Churches are built to her, than to her Son? And how many *Pilgrimages* are made to her Shrines and Reliques? And thus I think little doubting will remain, that the Worſhip of the *Baalim* begun at *Babylon*, is now ſet up in the Chriſtian *Rome.*

Now how contrary this is to the Divine Nature, common reaſon may ſuggeſt? as alſo to the exaltation of the Perſon of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 42. 8. *God is a jealous God, and will not give his Glory to another.* We have but *one Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 8. 6. who by his moſt precious Blood ſhed for us, purchaſed the Honour of being Mediator betwixt God and Man: And therefore *Chriſtians* ought only to make mention of his Name. Beſide, the great Evil of Idolatry is, that it debaſes the Soul of the profane Worſhipper, *for like them are all they that truſt in them*, Pſal. 115. 8. It leads away the Mind from that inward, free, and ſpiritual Converſe and Fellowſhip with God, to which the Goſpel invites us, and carries it out into an external, ſenſible, and dead Religion: It ſtifles the Power of true Piety, making it die out in formal and ſtupifying Superſtition: And the Plagues which Heaven pours out on thoſe ungodly Worſhippers, are heavy and great.

A black Roll of them in the end of the first *Chap.* to the *Romans*, which were the Consectaries on their not glorifying of God, as God, which is branched out into the two Kinds I have discoursed of. The first is, *v.* 23. *They changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man*, &c. And the second is, *v.* 25. *Who worshipped and served the Creature more than* (or besides) *the Creator*. And it would raise horror in sober Minds to tell how much the Sin of the Flesh, particularly *the Sin of* Sodom, which is first reckoned in that dismal Catalogue, abounds with these of this Spiritual *Babylon*.

And will the poor distinctions of *Dulia* and *Latria* save them from this Guilt? Alas! these are parts of the Mystery by which they would vail their Abominations; but their Nakedness is not hid with this thin Vail. For we see how simply all religious Worship offered to Creatures displeased God: Neither did the Prophets tell the *Israelites* that a kind of Worship called *Dulia*, or *Service*, might be payed to Creatures, but the *Latria*, or Adoration, was only proper to God; indeed they dreamed not of this subtilty; *And when St.* John *offered to fall down before the Angel, he warns him not to do it, as being not only his Fellow-creature, but his Fellow-servant*, Revel. 19. 10. by which all that Prostration for Worship is declared unlawful; And what can be called Adoration, if to offer Prayers, to make Vows, to sing Hymns, to observe Days, and to build Churches, be not such? These nice Distinctions which the Schoolmen have devised, will serve in no stead in the great Day, *when God's jealousy shall burn like Fire* against all that have dishonoured him, by this profane worshipping of Creatures. And it is certain, that however some speculative People may have distinct Notions of these kinds of Worship, yet the Vulgar, in their Practice, make no difference at all, but place all their trust in them, fly to them in their troubles as to their refuge and strong hold; whereby that Faith and Confidence which is only due to God and his Son is abated, so much of it being bestowed on Creatures. And what a baseness of Mind doth it discover, for Men, to whom God hath revealed so much of the Riches of his Grace, and hath allowed constant and free access to his Throne, with the largest encouragements and assurances of being heard and accepted by him; and who hath given Mankind a Mediator, who in the likeness of our Flesh did express the greatest and freest Love ima-

 ginable

ginable, dying for us, and being now our Advocate and Interceſſor with his Father; that inſtead of converſing immediately with God and Chriſt in the Exerciſes of Devotion, we ſhould betake our ſelves to a dead and lifeleſs invocating of thoſe, of whoſe hearing us we can have no aſſurance, and in which there can be no comfort nor true joy found.

So much of the Object of Worſhip, the Manner of it is next to be conſidered: We obſerved before, that God called us in the Goſpel to a lively and ſpiritual Worſhip; and this was firſt in oppoſition to the Sorceries of the Gentile Worſhip, and next to the heavy Yoke of the Jewiſh Bondage. How much of Sorcery and Enchantments was uſed in Heatheniſm, every one that gives account of their Forms do mention; but indeed all they uſed was nothing, if compared to the Enchantments of the Roman Church; and firſt of all, Can any thing look liker a Charm, than the worſhipping God in an unknown Tongue? in which the Worſhipper is capable of no converſe with God by theſe parts of Worſhip, which he doth not underſtand. Next, the muttering ſo large portions of the Worſhip, chiefly in the Office of the Maſs, what doth it look like but the mumbling of Charm? But ſhall I here tell of *the charming of Water, of Salt, of Wax-Candles, for driving away of Devils?* Shall I next tell of *the chriſtening of Bells, the hallowing of Oil, the touching of Beads, the touching of little Pebbles*; which ſhall have a virtue againſt Sickneſs of all kinds, Thunders and Lightnings, and Tentations of the Devil? Shall I next tell of *the conſecrating Roſes, Agnus Dei's, Medals*, and the like? Or, ſhall I tell of *their Exorciſms and Charms for driving out Devils*, with all the ſtrange Actions uſed in them? Shall I mention the *Reliques*, and and all the Virtues believed to be in them, yea, and derived from them? Shall I mention their *priviledged Altars*, their *Jubilees*, the *Prayers* upon which *Indulgences* are granted, their *ſolemn Proceſſions*, together with all the ſmall Tricks are uſed in every part of their Worſhip? All this would be endleſs. Theſe Things cannot but eat out the Power of Religion, and introduce a dry and empty *Skelleton* of enchanted Actions, inſtead of that lively Image of God, which the Chriſtian Religion deſigns to reſtore in us.

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In a word, ſhall I tell how the Sacramental Actions are polluted by the ſuperfetation of ſo many new Rites, whereby they are wholly changed from their original Simplicity.

In Baptiſm, *inſtead of waſhing with Water, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*; how have they added ſo many adulterated Rites? the Child muſt be thrice blown upon, then a Charm uſed for turning the Devil out of him, he muſt be anointed with holy Oil, and hallowed Salt muſt be put in his Mouth, ſanctified Garments alſo muſt be put on him, and a holy Wax-candle in his Hand, and the Prieſt's Spittle muſt be gently ſtroaked upon him. Whether doth all this look like the Simplicity of the Spouſe of Chriſt, or the Attire of the Harlot?

And in the other Sacrament, a great deal more ado is made; ſo that any indifferent Spectator, who were not warned of it, would ſwear it were a ſolemn piece of Pageantry; the Prieſt muſt come in cloathed with rich embroidered Veſtments, then he goes to the Altar, ſometimes reads on the one ſide, then he turns to the other; Often he bows, and kiſſes, and croſſes, ſometimes ſingle, ſometimes thrice repeated croſſes: Moſt of the Office he mutters, though what he ſays is all alike underſtood, being in an unknown Tongue; Sometimes he turns to the People, and gives them a ſhort *Barbarian* Benediction; Then he goes on till he comes to the five wonder-working Words; And then inſtead of the Bread, which the force of theſe words hath driven to nothing, behold a God, to be worſhipped by the Spectators, And after the Adoration, the God is to be devoured by the Prieſt; which made the *Arabian* ſay, *He never ſaw a Sect of Religion ſo fooliſh as the* Chriſtians *were, who with their Teeth devoured the God they had adored.*

Certainly all this looks ſo like a piece of Extravagance, eſpecially if the ſimplicity of the firſt Inſtitution be conſidered, that many will doubt if it be poſſible that ſuch Worſhip can be received in any corner of the Chriſtian World. And by theſe Hints, though an hundred more might be inſtanced, let it be gueſſed what is become of the ſimplicity of the *Chriſtian* Religion, when it is ſo vitiated in all the Parts and Branches of it: And whether that genuine ſincere ſpirituality appear in it, which the Goſpel holds forth to the World? Theſe things having a native tendency for leading away the Soul from attending upon

God, in her Acts of Worſhip; which is the only thing for which external Worſhip is to be continued in, that in it we may jointly concur to converſe with our Maker. If from this I ſhould reckon up all the Tricks are uſed in ſecreter Worſhip, what Stories ſhould I tell of the pattering over the Beads, of the multiplying little unintelligible Prayers, the uſing of Penances, ſome whereof are ridiculous for their gentleneſs, and others of them are as formidable for their horror, and fitter for the *Prieſts of Baal*, or the *worſhippers of Diana Taurica*, then for thoſe that worſhip the living God with joy and gladneſs of Heart? Now by the performance of theſe, the ſimple deluded People imagine themſelves reconciled to God, and ſecured from his Wrath: And ſo go about them meerly in the opinion of a Charm.

But I muſt next ſhew how the multiplicity of the Jewiſh Rites was alſo brought in upon Chriſtendom; though Chriſt came to ſet us at liberty from that *Pedagogy*, which was made up of Ordinances and lifeleſs Precepts, *that could not make the doer thereof perfect*: nothing being enjoined in the Chriſtian Religion, but that which was of it ſelf eaſy and proper for the great Deſign of purifying our Souls. Now ſuch as have brought in a Yoke of Ordinances, that have no tendency to the cleanſing of our Souls, but oppreſs us with their tyrannical burdenſomneſs, being both heavy, and numerous, muſt be looked on as the introducers of a new Judaiſm, for oppreſſing the Chriſtian World; What a heap of new ſuperadded Forms have the High-Prieſts of *Rome* brought upon theſe who ſtoop to their Tyranny? And how much Sanctity do they place in them; enjoining ſeverer Cenſures on the violation of theſe, than on the greateſt Tranſgreſſions againſt either the Moral or Poſitive Laws of God? How many Holy Days have they inſtituted? How much diſtinction of Meats, of Faſting, and Abſtinence? And how like are their Jubilees and Pilgrimages to the Jubilees and yearly trotting up to *Jeruſalem*, which was among the *Jews*? In a word, there is not a piece of Worſhip about which there is not a greater appendage of vain, pompous, and withall burdenſom Ceremonies, than were among the *Jews*.

Shall I here mention the five ſuperadded Sacraments, to the two inſtituted by Chriſt, with all the Rites belonging to each of them, or recount all the Rites in their multifarious Ordinations?

Shall

Shall I tell of the laying up the Bodies when dead, and of the forms of their Burials? The burning of Lamps in the cleareſt Day, together with the Incenſe that perfumes the Worſhip, which are clear pieces of antiquated Judaiſm. In a word, no part of the parallel holds more exactly, than that *they are zealous of the Traditions of their Fathers, whereby the Commandments of God are made of none effect*; and *that they honour God with their Lips, when their Hearts are far from him*: And *worſhip him in vain, teaching for Doctrins the Commandments of Men*, Matth. 15. 8, 9.

And hitherto I have diſcourſed upon the firſt limb of Antichriſtianiſm, and have diſcovered too evident Indications of the Contradictions is in it, to the firſt branch of the Deſign of Chriſtianity; whereby the Worſhip of God is partly adulterate, and partly ſmothered by a heavy and trouble-ſome Load of uſeleſs and lifeleſs Performances; which muſt needs lead out the Soul from an inward attending on God, or free converſe with him.

The ſecond Branch of Chriſtianity is, the holding forth that Myſterious Contrivance of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, *for reconciling the World to himſelf, by his dear Son; whom he gave to the Death for us, and alſo raiſed up, making him both Lord, and Chriſt*: Whoſe Glory and dignity is vulgarly branched out in theſe his three Offices, of *Prophet*, *Prieſt*, and *King*.

By the firſt of which, he revealed the Father, and his whole Counſel to Mankind, in plain and ſimple Diſcourſes, afterwards committed to writing by the faithful Eye and Ear-witneſſes of his Majeſty. His Prophetick Office therefore is chiefly acknowledged, in our grateful receiving theſe Diſcoveries, and our ſtudying to adjuſt both our Faith and Practice to that unerring Rule. But can any thing be more contradictory to this, than to keep the knowledg of theſe Writings from Chriſtians, to accuſe their Darkneſs and Defects, and to apprehend great danger from their diligent peruſal, to vilify that ſacred Study, preferring the lame and lifeleſs Diſcourſes of Men, to the Words of eternal Wiſdom? For we muſt conſider, that our ſtudy of the Goſpel, is of the ſame nature with a perſonal following of Chriſt when on Earth, to ſee his Miracles, and hear his Doctrin; the ſame is alſo to be ſaid of the Acts and Epiſtles of the Apoſtles. Now to bar the Vulgar from this, is to hinder them to hear and ſee Chriſt and his

Apoſtles

Apoſtles, as if that were a Priviledge reſtricted to Church-men. What ſhall be then ſaid of theſe, *who call the Scriptures a Noſe of Wax, the Sourſe of all Hereſies, a Book written not on Deſign, but upon particular Emergents*; and do aſſert its incompleatneſs, unleſs made up by the Traditions of the Church? Is not this to add to the Words of that Book, and to accuſe the faithful *Witneſs* of Unfaithfulneſs? But worſe than all this is held by theſe, who will have all the Authority of the Scriptures to depend on the Church, which muſt be believed in the firſt place.

But here a great difference is to be made betwixt the Teſtimony of a *Witneſs*, and the Authority of a *Judg*; the former is not denied to the Church, and ſo the *Jews* had the Oracles of God committed to them; but that doth not prove the Authority of their *Sanhedrim* infallible, or ſuperior to Scripture; and in this caſe more cannot be aſcribed to the Chriſtian Church, than was proper to the Jewiſh in our Saviour's Time. But further, if the Scripture be to be believed on the Teſtimony of the Church, then upon what account is the Church firſt believed? It cannot be ſaid, becauſe of any teſtimony in Scripture, for if it give Authority to the Scriptures, it cannot receive its Authority from their Teſtimony. How then ſhall it be proved that the Church muſt be believed? or muſt it be taken from their own word? and yet no other Reaſon can be given to prove the Church Infallible. For to ſay that they have continued in a Succeſſion of Biſhops from the Apoſtles days, concludes nothing, unleſs it be firſt proved that the Doctrine of the Apoſtles was of God; otherwiſe, the *Mahometan* Religion is as much to be believed, ſince for many Ages a Succeſſion of Prieſts have believed it. Further, the Greek Churches drive up the Series of their Biſhops to the Apoſtles Days, as well as the Roman; why then ſhould not their Authority be likewiſe acknowledged infallible? In fine, muſt the Vulgar go and examine the Succeſſions of the Biſhops, and judg about all the dubious Elections, whether the Conveyance have been interrupted or not? Certainly were this to be done, it were an impoſſible Atchievement, and harder than the ſtudy of the Originals of both Teſtaments: Therefore the Vulgar muſt ſimply believe the Authority of the Church on her own Teſtimony; which is the moſt abſurd thing imaginable, and this to every Individual, will reſolve into the Teſtimony of their Prieſt. Behold then a goodly Foundation for building our Faith upon!

Chriſt's

Chriſt's Prophetick Office is alſo invaded, by pretence of the Churches Infallibility in expounding Scriptures: for if this be granted, the whole Authority will be devolved on the Church, for by this Doctrine ſhe may teach what ſhe will; and were the Scripture-Evidence never ſo full to the contrary, yet whatever wreſted Expoſition ſhe offers, though viſibly contrary to the plain meaning of the words, muſt be believed. But with whom this Power and Authority is lodged, is not agreed to among themſelves; ſome yielding it to the High-Prieſt of the Church, when in his Chair; others to the great *Sanhedrim* of *Chriſtendom* in a *General Council*; others to both jointly: but all this is aſſerted without proof, for that of Chriſt's, *of telling the Church*, Matth. 18. 17. ſo often repeated by them, is meant of particular Offences, and ſo is reſtricted to the Caſe of Differences among Brethren, and relates not to Points of Doctrine. Beſides, the Context of theſe Words doth clearly ſhew them applicable to every Parochial Church, and yet their Infallibility cannot be aſſerted. So it is clear, that Chriſt doth only ſpeak of a Juriſdiction for quieting of Differences among the Brethren.

That of *the Gates of Hell their not prevailing againſt the Church*, Mat. 16. 18. proves not the Pretence of Infallibility. And indeed the Tranſlation of that place deſerves Amendment, and inſtead of *Hell*, that word is to be rendred *Grave*; ſo that the meaning of the Phraſe is, Death (which is the Mouth and Gate through which we paſs into the Grave, and is ſo uſed by *Greek* Writers) ſhall never prevail againſt the Church; that is, the Church ſhall never die.

Neither will that of *the Spirit of Truth leading out into all Truth*, John 16. 13. advance the Cauſe a whit, ſince that Promiſe relates to all Believers; and it is a part of the happineſs of the new Diſpenſation, that all in it ſhall be taught of God. And the Promiſe of *founding the Church on St.* Peter, *Matth.* 16. ſaith as little; for ſuppoſe the Rock on whom the Church were to be built, were St. *Peter* himſelf, which I ſhall not much controvert; that is not peculiar unto him, ſince *we are all built on the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets*; and on the *twelve Foundations of the New Jeruſalem, are written the Names of the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb.* But what will that prove for a Series of the Biſhops of *Rome?*

And finally, *for the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 16. 19. their being given to St. *Peter*, that ſaith no more, but that he was to open the Goſpel, which is uſually called, *the Kingdom of God*, or, *of Heaven* in the New Teſtament. Now the uſe of Keys being to open the Door, this was peculiar St. *Peter*'s Honour, who did firſt publiſh the Goſpel both to Jews and Gentiles, and in particular did firſt receive the Gentiles into the New Diſpenſation. But this hath no relation to the Biſhops of *Rome*, nor to the pretended Infallibility of that See.

That which hath the faireſt appearance of reaſon is, that if there be no abſolute unerring Court on Earth, for deciding of Controverſies, there ſhall be no end of them; but every private Man may, upon the pretence of ſome ill-underſtood place of Scripture, break the Unity of the Church, and ſo the Peace of the Church is in hazard of being irrecoverably loſt. But how ſpecious ſoever this may appear, it hath no weight in it: For it is certain, that Vice, as well as Errour, is deſtructive of Religion, and it will be no imputation on our Religion, that the one be no more guarded againſt, than the other is; if then there be no Authority for repreſſing Vice, but the outward diſcipline of the Church; it is not incongruous there is no other Authority for ſuppreſſing of Error, but that ſame of the Diſcipline of the Church. It is certainly a piece of Humility, for a Man to ſuſpect his own Thoughts, when they lye croſs to the Sentiments of the Guides and Leaders of the Church: But withal, a Man ought to be in all he does, *fully perſwaded in his own Mind*; and we are commanded *to try the Spirits, and not to believe every Spirit*, 1 Joh. 4. 1. Now Reaſon being the chief excellency of Man, and that wherein the Divine Image doth mainly conſiſt, it were very abſurd to deny Man a rational judging and diſcerning of theſe things wherein his eternal Intereſt is moſt concerned. Beſides the Nature of Religion, it being a thing ſutable to the Powers of the Soul, ſhews that a Man muſt have a conviction of the truth of it on his Mind, and that he cannot be bound in contradiction to his own apprehenſions, to receive any Opinions meerly upon the teſtimony of others.

If to confirm all this, I ſhould add all can be brought from Hiſtory for proving General Councils to have erred in Matters of Faith; or that Popes have been Hereticks, or that they have been

been anathematized as ſuch, by other Popes and General Councils, I ſhould be too tedious. But in end, how ſhall the Vulgar know the Definitions of Councils, or the Decrees of Popes? Or muſt they be blindly determined by the Prieſt's Aſſertion? Certainly, this were to expoſe them to the greateſt Hazards, ſince they are not ſuffered to found their Faith upon the Scriptures: Nor doth the Church reveal her Doctrines to them, ſo that their Faith muſt be reſolved upon the bare Teſtimony of a Prieſt, who is perhaps both ignorant and licentious. And by this we may judg to what a paſs the Souls of the People are brought by this Doctrine.

In a word, *We are not the Servants of Men*, nor bound to their Authority; for none can be a Judg, but where he hath Power both to try and to coerce. Now none but God can either ſearch our Hearts, or change them; for as no Humane Power can know our Thoughts, ſo neither can it turn them, which are not in our own Power, much leſs in the Power of others; therefore our Conſciences can, and muſt only fall within God's Juriſdiction; And ſince the renovation of the Image of God conſiſts in Knowledg, and Religion deſigns an union of our Souls to Divine Truth, that we may freely converſe with it, it will follow, that all theſe Pretences of abſolute Authority and Infallibility in Teaching, are contrary to Chriſt's Prophetick Office, who came *to reveal the Father to us.*

The ſecond of Jeſus Chriſt's Offices was the Prieſtly, without which the former had never been effectual; for had we known never ſo perfectly the Will of God, without a method had been laid down for reconciling Sinners to him, it was in vain to think of Religion, ſince nothing Sinners could do, was able to appeaſe God, or expiate Sin; but this was fully done by the Sacrifice of that Lamb of God, *Who became Sin for us, and bare our Sins in his own Body; in whom we have Redemption, even forgiveneſs of Sin through his Blood*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Epheſ. 1. 7. If then any have derogated from the value of this Satisfaction, they have offered the utmoſt indignity to the higheſt Love, and committed the Crime of the greateſt Ingratitude imaginable; who would requite the moſt inconceivable Love with ſuch a Sacrilegious attempt: But, how guilty are they of this, who would ſet the Merits and Works of Men, in an equality with the Blood

of God? as if by these we were justified, or owed our Title to Glory, to our own performances, whereas we are taught by the Oracles of God, that *by Grace we are saved, that God only hath made the difference betwixt us and others*; *and that he hath freely chosen us in his Son Christ Jesus*, Ephes. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 4. 7. And alas! what are we, or what is all we do, that it can pretend to the lowest degree of God's Acceptance, without he freely, both help us in it, and accept of us for it? so that when he rewards us for our Services with Eternal Life, he freely crowns his own free Gifts to us. For when we consider how great a disproportion there is betwixt our best Services and Eternal Glory, when we also remember how all our good Actions flow from the Principles of Divine Grace freely given, but withal, reflect on the great Defects and Imperfections that hang about our best Performances, we will not be able to entertain any thoughts of our meriting ought at the Hands of God. And certainly, the deeper Impressions we have, either of the Evil of Sin, or the Goodness of God; we will be further from a capacity of swelling big in our own Thoughts, or of claiming any thing on the pretensions of Justice or Debt. It is true, this Doctrine of *Merit* is so explained by some of that Church, that there remains no ground of quarrelling it; except for the Terms sake, which is indeed odious and improper, (though early used by the Ancients in an innocent sense). But many of that Church acknowledg, there there can be no Obligation on God by our Works, but that which his own Promise binds upon him; which none, who believe the Truth of the Promises of the Gospel, can question: yet still we must remember that we owe all to the Love of Jesus, and nothing to our selves: which as it is the Matter of the *Hallelujahs* of glorified Saints, so should be the Subject of our daily Acknowledgments; wherefore, we must abominate every thing that may seem to detract from this. But alas! were all this Zeal, many of that Communion own for Merits and good Works, meant for the advancing a Holy and Spiritual Life, it would carry a good Apology with it, and its noble Design would very much qualify the severity of its Censure; but when these good Works, which for so many Ages were highly magnified, were the building of Churches, the enriching of Abbeys, Pilgrimages, and other trifling and voluntary pieces of Will-worship, advanced for the Secular Interests of the Church; what shall be

said

ſaid of all that pains was uſed by the Monks for advancing them, but that they were willing to ſell the value of the Blood and Merits of Chriſt, for advancing their own ſecular Intereſts, and deviſed Practices? Alas! how far are theſe from that Holineſs and Sanctity, which muſt qualify us for the Kingdom of God, and the Inheritance of the Saints.

And to end this Matter, let me add one thing, which is moſt evident to all who have obſerved the Methods of the Directors of Conſciences in that Church, that with whatever Diſtinctions this Matter be varniſhed over among them, yet the Vulgar do really imagine they buy and ſell with Almighty God, by their undergoing theſe Laws of the Church, and Penances impoſed by their Confeſſor: Which as it nouriſheth the Life of Pride and Self-love, ſo it detracts from the value they ought to ſet on the Blood of Chriſt, as their only Title to Heaven and Glory.

And to this, I muſt add that diſtinction of the *temporary and eternal Puniſhments* Sin deſerves: The latter whereof they acknowledg are removed by the Blood of Chriſt; but the former muſt be expiated by our ſelves, either by Sufferings in this Life, or thoſe we muſt endure in *Purgatory*, unleſs by the Pope's Charity we be delivered from them. Now, how contrary this is to the Value we are taught to ſet on the Blood of Chriſt, all may judg. Epheſ.2.15. & 5.27. *By Chriſt Peace is made, we are reconciled to God; he repreſents us to the Father without ſpot or wrinkle.* And much more of this Nature meeting us in Scripture, declares how plenary his Satisfaction was; nothing being left undone by him, for removing the Guilt and Demerit of Sin. And what comfortleſs Doctrine this is, we may ſoon apprehend how it takes away that Joy in God, at the approches of Death, ſince there is ſuch hazard of direful Miſeries following. Now, this was no ſmall part of the Myſtery, by which the World was brought under their Dominion; and therefore great pains was taken for rooting the belief of it deep in all Mens Hearts, many Viſions and Apparitions were vouched for its Proof; and all the Lives of the Saints, that were written for divers Ages, were full of ſuch fabulous Narrations; ſome Souls were ſaid to be ſeen ſtanding in burning Brimſtone to the Knees, ſome to the Middle, ſome to the Chin; others ſwimming in *Caldrons of melted Metal*, and Devils pouring the Metal down their Throats; with many ſuch affrighting Stories.

But for all this, the Proof from Scripture was only drawn from one wreſted place of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 1 Cor. 3. 12, 13, 14, 15. who ſaith, *That in the Day of the Lord, ſuch as built upon the Foundation of Chriſt, ſuperſtructures of Wood, Hay, and Stubble, ſhould be ſaved, becauſe they kept the Foundation, yet ſo as by Fire.* But this was only a proverbial form of Speech, to expreſs the riſque they run to be ſuch, as of one that eſcapes out of a Fire; ſuch proverbial Speeches being uſual in Scripture, as that of the Prophet, *Zech.* 3. 2. *Is not this a Brand plucked out of the Fire?* Or of the Apoſtle, *Jude* 23. *Some ſave with fear, pulling them out of the Fire.* And any conſidering Perſon will, at firſt view, ſee how ſlender a Foundation this was for the Superſtructure built upon it.

But the way was contrived for preſerving Souls from, or reſcuing them out of Purgatory, will diſcover what were the Inducements of advancing the belief of it with ſuch Zeal, which was thus framed: It is believed by that Church, that beſide the Commands that neceſſarily oblige all Chriſtians, there are many Counſels in the Goſpel, in order to the attaining a higher pitch of Perfection, ſuch as the Counſels of Poverty, and Chaſtity, or the like; and they teach, that ſuch as did not obey theſe, cannot be ſaid to have ſinned; but on the other hand, thoſe who have obeyed them, ſhall not want a Reward, by their ſo *ſupererrogating* beyond what was ſtrictly bound upon them, and the Reward of them is their meriting both for themſelves and others, an exemption from the Pains of Purgatory. And of all theſe Merits, there is a *common Treaſure of the Church*, wherein for good manners ſake the Merit of Chriſt is the chief Stock; and this is committed to the Succeſſors of St. *Peter*, to whom the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are believed to be given, who can communicate of that Spiritual Treaſure as they will, either for preſerving Souls from Purgatory, or for delivering them out of it. This could not but work wonders for the exaltation of the Papal Dignity, when he was conceited to be honoured of God with ſo high a Truſt. This was alſo made an Engin for advancing all the Papal Deſigns, for upon any Quarrel he had with any Prince, the Popes proclaimed a *Croiſade*, promiſing exemption from Purgatory to all who hazarded their Lives for the Service of the Holy Church. And the contrivance of Purgatory being univerſally believed, this could not fail to draw great numbers

about

about his Standards. And by this means he brought moſt Princes into that ſervile ſubjection to him, under which they groaned for many Ages.

Another practice yet more baſe and ſordid was, the ſelling of Indulgences and Pardons for Mony. Certainly here was *Simon's Crime* committed by the pretended Succeſſors of him, who had of old accuſed him, *that thought the Gift of God might be purchaſed with Mony*, and thereupon did caſt him out of the Church. It were endleſs to tell the baſe Arts, and blaſphemous Diſcourſes of the Monks who were ſent through the World to ſell theſe Indulgences, which in the end proved fatal to that Church, ſince the exceſſive magnifying of them did firſt provoke *Luther* to examine their Corruptions. It is true, they will not hear of the harſh word of *ſelling Indulgences*, but diſguiſe it with their giving them to ſuch as will offer Alms to the Church; but really, this whole Contrivance is ſo baſe, ſo carnal, and ſo unlike the Spirit of Chriſtianity, that to repeat it, is to refute it. Here was a brave Device for enriching the Church, when the making great Donations to it, was judged ſo effectual for delivering out of Purgatory. Who would not out of love to his Friend's Soul, if he believed him frying in theſe Flames, give liberally of his Goods; but much rather would a Man give all that he had for his own Security, eſpecially when on his Death-bed he were beſet with Perſons who were confounding him with diſmal Apprehenſions, and thus trafficking with him *for the exchange of his Soul*. Hence ſprung the enriching of Abbeys and Churches; for every Religious Order hath its own peculiar Merits, which they can communicate to one of their Fraternity: If then a dying Man had gained their favour ſo much, that he was received into their Order, and died wrapped in one of their Froeks, then was his Soul ſecure from the *grim Tormentors* below. And what an endleſs heap of Fables had they, of Souls being on the brink, or in the midſt of the Flames, and of a ſudden ſnatched out!

But now all this Trade hath quite failed them, therefore Indulgences are fallen in their Rates, and in ſtead of them, there are Prayers to be uſed, and eſpecially to be ſaid before *priviledged Altars*, or at ſuch Times, or before ſuch Reliques, that it is no hard work for any among them to ranſome the Souls of others, or to preſerve their own. In a word, doth not all this debaſe the Spirit of true Religion, and expoſe it to the jealouſy of

Atheiſts,

Atheiſts, as if it were a Contrivance for advancing baſe and ſecular Deſigns. And doth it not eat out the Senſe of true Piety, when the Vulgar ſee the Guides of Souls making ſuch ſhameful Merchandiſe of them, and doing it with ſuch reſpect of Perſons, that if a Man be rich enough, he is ſecure; *whereby our Lord's bleſſing of the Poor, and paſſing a Woe on the Rich, is reverſed.* But above all, what indignity is by this done to the Blood of the Son of God? And how are the People carried from their dependance on Him, and their value of His Sufferings, by theſe Practices!

Another Art not very remote from this, for detracting from the value of Chriſt's Death, and the confidence we ſhould have in it, is, the Prieſtly Abſolution, wherein after the Sinner hath gone over his Sins, without any ſign of remorſe, and told them to the Prieſt, he enjoins a Penance, the doing whereof, is called a *ſatisfaction*; and the Vulgar do really imagine, that the undergoing the Penance, doth fully ſerve for appeaſing God's Wrath againſt Sin; but as ſoon as the Prieſt hath enjoined his Penance, without waiting that they obey it, he lays his Hand on their Head, and ſays, *I abſolve thee*; and after this, they judg themſelves fully cleanſed of Sin, and that they may receive the Sacrament, had their former Life been never ſo bad. It is true, the practice of the Prieſts in their ſlight Penances, and haſted Abſolutions, and promiſcuous allowing of all the Holy Sacrament, is condemned by many in that Church, who complain of theſe Abuſes with much honeſt Zeal; but theſe Complaints are ſo little regarded, that their Writings are condemned, and the Corruption continues unreformed. Now what can take off more from the value of the Death of Chriſt, than to believe it in the Power of a Prieſt to abſolve from Sin? All the Power of the Church being either Miniſterially to declare the Abſolution offered in the Goſpel upon the Conditions in it, or to abſolve from the ſcandal which any publick Treſpaſs hath given. It was counted Blaſphemy in Chriſt, when he ſaid, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, Mar. 2. 5, 10. of which he cleared himſelf, *from the Power was committed to the Son of Man on Earth, to forgive Sins*; which ſhews it to be Blaſphemy in all others to pretend to abſolve from Sin, it being an Invaſion of his Prerogative.

To

To this I might add the Scorn put on Religion by many of the Penances enjoined for Sin, ſuch as the abſtaining from Fleſh for ſo many Days, the pattering over ſo many Prayers, the repeating the *penitential Pſalms*, the going to ſuch Churches, and ſuch Altars; with other ridiculous Obſervances like theſe, which cannot but kill the Vitals of true Religion, and lead away Souls from theſe earneſt Applications to Jeſus Chriſt for Pardon and Renovation. And who can have any ſad Apprehenſions of Sin, who is taught ſuch an eaſy way of eſcaping Puniſhment?

I confeſs in this, as in all other parts of Religion, the Maſters of that Church have ſo contrived things, that their Doctrines might, *according to the Fable of the Manna, taſte pleaſant in every Man's reliſh*: for if any be grave and melancholy, then ſilence, ſolitude, and retirement are enjoined them; if their Tempers be more fiery and ſullen, ſevere corporal Mortifications and Diſciplines are tasked on them, ſuch as cruel and perhaps publick Whipping, or other unſpeakable Auſterities, with which the Lives of the modern Saints are full; but if one be of a more jolly temper, who deſires Heaven at an eaſy rate, then ſome trifling Penance ſhall ſerve turn. Theſe are a few of their Arts for diverting Souls from flying unto Jeſus, as to the ſure and ſafe Refuge from the Father's Wrath, in whom only we can find ſanctuary, and whom the Father hath ſent into the World to ſeek and ſave loſt Sinners. Now whether the Prieſts in the injunction of eaſy Penances, and giving Abſolution, do not violate the Prerogative of Jeſus, and inſenſibly debauch Souls from that affectionate and grateful Duty they owe their Redeemer, into their trifling Methods and Appointments, I refer it to all who know them.

Another Oppoſition made to the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt is, their Conceit of the Sacrifice of the Maſs, which they believe is a formal Expiation of Sins, both for the Living and Dead, who are in Purgatory: Chriſt once offered himſelf up for taking away Sin, which he did by that one Sacrifice, and this is by the *Apoſtle ſtated amongſt the Differences which are betwixt the Sacrifices of* Moſes, *which were to be daily and yearly renewed and repeated, whereas Chriſt offered one Sacrifice in the end of the World, ſo that there was no need of more*, Heb. 10. 1, 2, 3, 12, 14. Now, to imagine that the Prieſts going through the Office of the Maſs, and his receiving

ceiving the conſecrated Elements, can have a virtue to expiate the Sins of others, eſpecially of the Dead, is a thing ſo contrary to the moſt common impreſſions, that it will puzzle a Man's Belief to think any can credit it. And yet this is one of the Maſterpieces of the Religion of that Church. It is true, in a right ſenſe, that Sacrament may be called a Sacrifice, as it was by the Ancients, either in general, as Prayers, Praiſes, and Almſdeeds are called ſo in Scripture; or as it is a Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Chriſt; but to imagine the Action hath an expiatory force in it, is a viſible derogation from the value of Chriſt's Death; and all the value is in any outward Sacramental Action, can only be derived into the Soul of the Receiver, but it is abſurd to think one Man's Action can be derived to another; and it clearly appears from the inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, that its end was the joint communicating of Believers, which is perverted manifeſtly by the practice of theſe Prieſts, who communicate in name of the Spectators.

Finally, What a derogation is it from the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt; one Branch whereof is his Interceſſion, to join Saints or Angels with him in that Work, nay, and prefer them to him? Which will be found too true, if the Office of the Virgin, and the Prayers offered to her, be compared with thoſe offered to her Son. Did Chriſt by the Merits of his Paſſion acquire this Honour at ſo dear a rate? and ſhall we for whom he ſuffered, rob him ſo injuriouſly and ſacrilegiouſly of his Honour, and beſtow it on theſe who are our Fellow-ſervants?

But having touched this in the former part of my Diſcourſe, I advance my Enquiry to the Oppoſition given the Regal Office of Chriſt: And firſt, how contrary is it to the Glory wherewith even his Humane Nature and Body is refulgent in Heaven, to believe, that *five words*, muttered out by the Prieſt, ſhall have the virtue to produce his real and glorified Body, inſtead of the annihilated Elements of Bread and Wine, and yet under their Accidents and Appearances? This is a new and ſtrange kind of Humiliation, if true, by which he who is now cloathed with Glory, muſt be every day expoſed under ſo thick, ſo dark, and ſo contemptible a covering, as are the reſemblances of Bread and Wine. What low thoughts of his Perſon muſt it breed in ſuch Minds as are capable of believing this Contrivance?

Again,

Again, he, as King of the Church, hath given her Laws and Precepts, to whoſe Obedience ſhe is obliged; to which none can add, without they acknowledg another Head, and whoſe Obligation none can untie or diſpenſe with; for Chriſt's Dominion conſiſts in this Authority he hath over our Conſciences, which he hath vindicated into Liberty, by delivering us from the Bondage of Corruption. If then any pretend a Power of obtruding new Articles on our Belief, or Obligations on our Conſciences, theſe muſt be confeſſed to be injurious to the Dignity wherewith Chriſt is veſted. What then ſhall be ſaid of him, who pretends an Authority of diſpenſing with, and diſſolving the Obligation of Oaths, of diſſolving the Wedlock-bond, of allowing the Marriage in the forbidden Degrees? And as for their Additions to the Laws of Chriſt, they are innumerable. And here what I mentioned laſt, calls me to mind of a pretty Device, to multiply the forbidden Degrees of Marriage, yea, and add the Degrees of Spiritual Kindred, that is, of Kindred with our God-fathers or God-mothers in Baptiſm, which is done upon no other deſign, but to draw in more to the Treaſure of the Church, by frequent Diſpenſes. If I ſhould here reckon up all the Additions which by the Authority of that Church are made to the Laws of Chriſt, I ſhould reſume all that I have hitherto alledged, they being viſible Additions to the Doctrine and Rules of the Goſpel, and impoſed with ſuch unmerciful Cruelty, that an *Anathema* is the mildeſt of the Spiritual Cenſures they thunder againſt ſuch as comply not with their Tyranny; and a Faggot would be its civil Sanction, were the Secular Powers at their Devotion. I do not deny but there is an Authority, both in the Civil and Eccleſiaſtick Powers, of enjoining things indifferent, but no Authority beſide Chriſt's can reach the Conſcience. Beſides, if theſe indifferent things ſwell ſo in their number, be vain, pompous, and uſeleſs, and be impoſed without all regard to the tender Scruples of weak Conſciences, they become tyrannical; and ſuch as do ſo impoſe them, diſcover their affecting a tyrannical and Lordly Dominion over Conſciences; and that they prefer their own Devices to the ſimpler Methods of Chriſt, and the plainer and eaſier Rules of his Goſpel.

But one Inſtance of their abrogating the Laws of Chriſt is more ſignal, in their violating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; wherein, tho he inſtituted it under both kinds, and did ſo diſtribute it, with the expreſs Command *that all ſhould drink of it*;

yet they presumed, *notwithstanding of that, and tho the Primitive Church distributed it in both Kinds, which is confessed in their Canon*, to snatch the Cup from the Laity, and engross it to the Clergy. Now it is to be considered, that the value of the Sacramental Actions flowing only from their Institution, the first Appointment should be most religiously observed in them: Besides, the universal extent of Christ's Word, *Drink ye all of it*, which was not used in the distribution of the Bread, hath a particular Mystery in it, to guard against the foreseen Corruption of that part of it; and the reason given in the distribution of the Cup, shews, it must reach to all that need the Blood of Christ *for the remission of Sins*; which not being restrained to the Priests, shews, that the Cup, without a direct oppolition to the Mind and Command of Christ, ought not to be taken from the People; and any that will read the goodly Reasons given for this Sacriledg, will see what a low account they have of the Commands of Christ, when upon such trifling Pretences they will violate them. And with how much cruelty they backed this Invasion of Christ's Authority, the History will declare, they beginning it with a perfidious burning of two Witnesses who opposed it at *Constance*: And occasioning so much War and Blood-shed against those who adhered to the Rule of the Gospel in the Matter, and refused to stoop to their Tyranny.

But I advance to another Invasion of Christ's Regal Authority, committed by him who pretends to be the *Universal Bishop* of the Church, and to have Authority over all Church-men; whom he makes swear Obedience to him, and looks on them but as his Delegates: It was unluckily done of *Gregory the Great*, to be so severe on this Head, as to condemn the Title of *Universal Bishop, as Antichristian*: But little dream'd he in how few Years his Successor would aspire to that height of Ambition. Now by this pretence, all these Officers whom Christ hath appointed to Rule and Feed his Church, are turned out of their Authority, and made subject to him: And with how much pride he treads on his Fellow-Bishops, the Histories of many Ages do declare. It is true, at first, as being Bishop of the Imperial City, the Bishops of *Rome* were highly esteemed, but Pride and Ambition began soon to leaven them; yet they were for the first four Ages, looked upon by the other Bishops, but as their Fellow-Bishops, and by the Decrees of two General Councils, the Bishops of *Constan-*

Conſtantinople were in all things, except the Precedency, made equal to them: And by the Decree of the Couneil of *Nice*, other Metropolitans are levelled with them. And here I muſt tell of a *ſhameful Forgery of three Biſhops of* Rome, *who, one after another, would have obtruded on the African Churches, a Decree, allowing of Appeals from them to the* Roman *See, as if it had been made at* Nice: *Which they of* Africk *rejected, and upon Tryal, found it to be none of the Appointments at* Nice, *but a Decree of the Council of* Sardice.

But by degrees the Biſhops of that City got up to the height they are now at; and not content with their uſurping over their Brethren and Fellow-Church-men; their next attempt was upon Princes, who deriving their Authority from *Jeſus Chriſt, the King of Kings, by whom Kings do reign*; it was an Invaſion of his Power to attempt againſt his Vice-Gerents on Earth. But the Popes made no Bones of this, for being now held *Chriſt's Vicars on Earth*, with other blaſphemous Titles, as *Vice-God*, yea, and *Lord God*, they thought their Power was limited, as long as Kings and Emperors were not even in Temporals ſubject to them. And therefore from the days of Pope *Gregory* the Seventh, they pretended to a Power of depoſing Princes, diſpoſing of their Dominions to others, and diſpenſing with the Oaths of Fidelity their Subjects had ſworn to them; and it was eaſy for them to make Crowns change their Maſters as they pleaſed: For there were always other ambitious Princes ready, for their own Ends, to invade the Dominions of theſe depoſed Kings, upon the Pope's Warrant; and the generality of the People were ſo poſſeſſed with the Pope's Power of releaſing Souls from Purgatory, and from the puniſhments due to Sin, that they were eaſily prevailed upon to follow his Thunders: And by that time the Popes had ſwarms of Emiſſaries of the begging Orders, who under ſhew of auſtere Piety, gained much reverence and eſteem in the World; and ſo got all ſubjected to the Papal Tyranny. Now, ſhould I inſtance this in Particulars, I ſhould tranſgreſs the limits of a ſhort Diſcourſe by a long Hiſtory; but the Lives of *Gregory* the Seventh, *Alexander* the Third, *Boniface* the Eighth, and *Julius* the Second; to mention no more, will ſufficiently convince any who will be at the pains to read them, as they are written by theſe who lived in that Communion. And *Matthew* of *Paris* will at

length inform his Reader, how much, and how often *England* ſmarted under this Tyranny.

And all this is ſo far from being denied, that it is defended avowedly by not a few of the *Canoniſts* and *Jeſuits*, and is a Doctrine dearly entertained in the Court of *Rome* to this day; as appeared from the late Attempt of Pope *Paul* the Fifth upon *Venice:* But the World is now a little wiſer, than to be carried away by theſe Arts, and therefore that Pretence is laid to ſleep, till haply the Beaſt be healed of the Wound was given it at the *Reformation.*

But I cannot leave this Particular, without my ſad Regrates, that too deep a tincture of this Spirit of Antichriſtianiſm is among many, who pretend much averſion to it; ſince the Doctrine of reſiſting Magiſtrates, upon colours of Religion, is ſo ſtiffly maintained, and adhered to by many, who pretend to be highly reformed, tho this be one of the Characters of the *ſcarlet-coloured Whore.* But thus far have we gone through the ſecond part of Antichriſt's Character, and have diſcovered too clear indications of a diſformity to the Spirit and Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, in all the Branches of the Honour and Worſhip due to Jeſus *the only Mediator of the New Covenant.*

From this I proceed to the third part of my Enquiry, which is, the Oppoſition made to the great Deſign of Chriſtian Religion, for elevating the Souls of Men into a *participation of the Divine Nature,* whereby the Soul being inwardly purified, and the outward Converſation regulated, the World may be reſtored to its *Primitive Innocence*: And Men admitted to an inward and intimate fellowſhip with their Maker. The firſt ſtep of this Renovation, is, *Repentance*; *for God commands Men every where to repent*; *and Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins* are always united: And this being an *horrour at Sin upon the ſenſe of its native deformity, and contrariety to the Law of God, which makes the Soul apprehend the hazard it hath incurred by it*; *ſo, as to ſtudy by all means poſſible to avoid it in all time coming*; nothing doth prepare the mind more for Faith in Chriſt, and the ſtudy of a new Life, than Repentance; which muſt needs be previous to theſe. But what Devices are found to enervate this? Sins muſt be divided into *Venial* and *Mortal*; the former deſerving only ſome temporal Puniſhment, and being eaſily expiated by ſome trifling piece of ſeeming

ſeeming Devotion, and hereby many Sins are ſtruck out of the Penitents conſideration: For who can have a great apprehenſion of that which is ſo ſlightly expiated? And this may be extended to the eaſy Pardons, given for acknowledged mortal Sins: For he who thinks that God can be appeaſed for them, with the ſaying by rote ſo many Prayers, cannot poſſibly have deep apprehenſions of their being either ſo diſpleaſing to God, or ſo odious in themſelves. But ſhall I to this add their aſſerting, that a *ſimple attrition, which is a ſorrow flowing from the conſideration of any temporal Evil, God hath brought upon the Sinner, without any regard had, either to the vileneſs of the Sin, or the Offence done to God by it*; that is (I ſay) can ſuffice for juſtifying Sinners, and qualifying them for the Sacrament, whereby the neceſſity of Contrition, and Sorrow flowing from the Principle of the Love of God, is made only a high degree of Perfection, but not indiſpenſibly neceſſary. In the next place; all theſe Severities they enjoin for Penances, do but tend to nouriſh the Life of Sin, when Sinners ſee a Trade ſet up by which they can buy themſelves off from the Wrath of God. To this is to be added the Doctrine of Indulgences, which is ſo direct an oppoſition to Evangelical Repentance, as if it had been contrived for diſpoſſeſſing the World of the ſenſe of it.

That which is next preſſed in the Goſpel for uniting the ſouls of Mankind to God, *is that noble ternary of Graces, Faith, Hope, and Love, by which the Soul reſts in God by a holy affiance in him, believing the Truth of his Goſpel, expecting the accompliſhment of his Promiſes, waiting for the full fruition of him, and delighting in his glorious Perfections, and Excellencies.* Now how much all this is ſhaken by theſe carnal and groſs Conceptions, the Roman Doctrine offers of God in their Image and Maſs-worſhip, and by their Idolatry to Saints, is apparent? Are they not taught to confind more in the *Virgin, or their Tutelar Saints*, than in the Holieſt of all? Doth not the fear of Purgatory damp the hopes of future bleſſedneſs? And finally, what impious Doctrine hath been publickly licenſed and printed in that Church of the degrees of the love we owe to God? Some blaſphemouſly teaching, *that we are not at all bound to love him*, others mincing it ſo, *as if they were afraid of his being too much beloved.*

In a word, there is an impiety in the Morals of ſome of that Church, particularly among the *Diſciples* of *Loyola*, beyond what

was

was ever taught amongſt the worſt of the Heathen Philoſophers, which hath been fully diſcovered by ſome of the honeſter and more zealous of that Communion. And though theſe Corruptions have not been avowed by the Head of that Church, yet by their being publickly vented, by the Deaf Ear he gives to all the Complaints againſt them, and by the conſtant Careſſes and Priviledges he heaps upon that Order which teacheth them, he diſcovers either his great Satisfaction in that corrupt Doctrine, or that upon the account of other intereſts, he is content to betray the Souls of Chriſtians into the corruption of ſuch impious and ungodly Leaders, ſince the Order that hath owned all theſe Corruptions is yet poſſeſſed of the Conſciences of the greater part of them that own that Communion, they being the univerſal Confeſſors. And ſince they licenſe the publick vending of ſo much corrupt Doctrine in printed Writings, what reaſon have we to ſuſpect their baſe compliance with Sins in their more ſecret and unknown Practiſings, with ſuch poor deluded Souls as truſt to their Conduct, of which many proofs are brought by other of that ſame Church?

But I purſue my enquiry into the other traces of the Antichriſtian Corruption, of the Purity and Power of our moſt Holy Faith: Solemn Worſhip, and ſecret Devotion, are the great means of uniting Souls to God, and of deriving the aſſiſtance of his Spirit and Grace to us; but when theſe are performed in an unknown Tongue, how uncapable are they of reaching that End? And the Doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacraments, for conveying of Grace *by the Work wrought*, looks like a deſign againſt all ſerious preparation for the worthy receiving of them; ſince by that Doctrine, a Man, be he never ſo ill prepared, yet is ſure of their efficacy; for if his Prieſt abſolve him, and he have *a ſimple Attrition for Sin*, without any thing of the Love of God, he is by their Doctrine and Conduct qualified for receiving worthily, were his Heart never ſo much united to Sin, or averſe from all Devotion, or Application to Divine Matters. And what Complaints ſhall be here made of theſe who teach that the ſure way of gaining the Favour of God, which they phraſe by *the Keys of Paradiſe*, is to ſay the *Ave, to bid the bleſſed Virgin, Good-morrow every day, or to ſend our Angel Guardian to ſalute her?* or finally, *to wear a Medal or Roſary in devotion to her, though from the firſt time we begin to wear it, we never again think of her*; Doth not all this look like a conſpiracy againſt the Power of Godlineſs?

But

But ſhall we next conſider the Moral Law, which though Chriſt ſaid *he came not to diſſolve, but to fulfil*, Matth. 5. 17. Yet they have found out Diſtinctions and Doctrines to deſtroy it. It is true, what may be ſaid here, cannot ſo directly, as to every particular, be charged upon the Roman Church, ſince it hath not been decreed by Pope, or Council; but when prophane *Caſuiſts* have printed Doctrines, which tend to the ſubverſion of the moſt common principles of Vertue and Morality, and theſe are licenſed according to the Rule of that Church: And for as publick as they are, and for all the Cenſures and Complaints others have paſſed upon them, yet they continue without any cenſure from the Chair of *Rome*, it is a ſhrewd preſumption that they are not unwelcome to that See: Though for good Manners-ſake they have given them no other owning, but a connivance, joined with an extraordinary cheriſhing of that School which vents them.

Two general Doctrines they have, which at two ſtroaks diſſolve all the bonds of Vertue. The one is, *the Doctrine of Probability*; the other, *of good Intention.*

By the firſt, they teach, that if any approved Doctor of the Church have held an Opinion about any practical thing, as probable any Chriſtian may with a ſafe Conſcience follow it, were it never ſo much condemned by others, and did it appear with the blackeſt Viſage: And by this it is, that ſcarce there is a Sin which may not be ſafely hazarded on, ſince there have been of the approved Doctors of that Church, who have made a ſhift, by diſtinctions, to repreſent the worſt Actions, not only as probable, but as really Good.

The next Doctrine is, of good Intention, *whereby they teach a Man to commit the groſſeſt Legerdemain with God and his own Conſcience imaginable; by which he may act any Sin he will, provided he intend not that, but ſome other good Deſign or Motive:* And any that will read the *Provincial Letters*, or the *Myſtery of Jeſuitiſm*, and compare their Citations with the Authors whence they take them, will ſoon be ſatisfied of the truth of this.

We have already ſeen how that Church violates the two firſt Commandments, by her Idolatry: Whereby in oppoſition to the firſt, ſhe worſhips Saints and Angels, with thoſe acts and expreſſions of Adoration only due to God. The ſecond is alſo palpably

palpably violated by their Image-worſhip, and adoring God under ſenſible and external repreſentations. The third is made void by the Pope's pretending to diſpence with Oaths, and to annul their Obligation, as alſo by their Doctrines of *Equivocation and mental Reſervations*, in all Oaths, both aſſertory, and promiſſory; beſides the impious Doctrines of ſome Caſuiſts, that juſtify the *prophaning of God's Sacred Name in raſh and common ſwearing*. Their contempt of the fourth Precept is not denied, it being uſually among them a Day of mercating, dancing, and fooliſh jollity: Many among them teaching, that to hear Maſs that day, doth fully anſwer the Obligation for its obſervance. Their contempt of the fifth follows, upon the Doctrine of the Pope's Power, of depoſing Princes, and freeing the Subjects from their Obligation to them; by which they are taught to rebel, and *reſiſt the Ordinance of God*. Beſides, their Caſuiſts allow it as lawful *to deſire the Parents Death, provided it be not out of malice to him, but out of a deſire of good to themſelves; that they may enjoy their Inheritance, or be rid of their Trouble*. Yea, ſome of their impious Caſuiſts ſay, *that Children may lawfully intend the killing of their Parents, and may diſown them, and Marry without their conſent*.

For the *ſixth Command*, their Caſuiſts do generally allow, *to kill in defence of Honour, Life, or Goods*, even though the hazard of loſing them be not near and evident, but afar off and uncertain: And they teach, that a Man is not bound to ſtay till another ſmite him; but if he threaten him, or if he offend with his Words, or if one know that he hath a deſign upon his Honour, Life, or Goods, he may, with a good Conſcience, prevent, and kill him. And this they extend to all ſorts of Perſons, both Secular and Religious; allowing it to Sons againſt their Fathers. And they leave it free to them to execute this by whatever means they judg moſt proper, whether by force, or ſurprize, or by the Service of others, if they dare not attempt to kill by their own Hands; which they ſtretch to the caſe of one who knows another guilty of a Crime, and intends to purſue him for it; and they allow the Guilty Perſon, if he know no other way of eſcape, to kill him who intends his Accuſation, that he may thereby preſerve his Life; in order to which they alſo allow it lawful to kill the Witneſſes that may prove the Crime.

As

As for the *seventh Command*, modesty cannot name their polluted Doctrines about it: They barred the Clergy the lawful use of Marriage, but did allow them Concubinate; and *the publick Licenses given to base Houses in the Popes Dominions, prove that See a Mother of Fornications, even in the Letter*; the Religious Houses being likewise full of Irreligious Intanglements into a course of life, which many times they are not able to bear; but being restrained from the *honourable Ordinance of God*, many of these Houses have proved either Nests of Filthiness, or of secret Impurities; which it seems by the rules of Confession, and the questions their Confessors puts to them, are known to abound among them. And any that have read these, will confess, that it defiles a Chast Mind to read them; but what must it be to ask them, especially at those of a different Sex? Shall I also here mention the frequent dispensing with Marriages within degrees forbidden, and their as frequent dissolving of that Sacred Knot, though *(as if they had resolved on a contradiction to all the Rules of the Gospel) they refuse to dissolve the Bond on the account of Adultery, which Christ hath made the only ground that can justifie the dissolution of it*? But shall I add to this, the base Impieties, of which not only these of purple and scarlet Livery among them have been notoriously guilty, but even the Villanies of some *that have worn the Triple Crown*? As I should grow too tedious, so I must needs tell things, which to a pure mind were both nauseating to write and to read. Those that have been in that Spiritual *Babylon*, know, that is *a Sodom, even in the letter*, none being more guilty of that crying Wickedness, than those that bear the character of *Religious* or *Sacred Orders*. And what shall we think of the Scarlet Fraternity, that produced *a Monster that attempted Heaven it self, by writing in defence of that Impiety, which it avenged by Fire and Brimstone*, and yet had no Censure passed on him for it? Whereas for the least tincture of *Calvinism* or *Lutheranism*, he had been condemned to the Fagot. Some of them do also teach, that Fornication is not forbidden by the Laws of Nature, and only by positive Precepts, so that it may be dispensed with.

For the *eighth Command*, those profane Casuists have made such shifts for it, that none needs to be guilty of Theft; for they teach it *to be no sin to take that from another which he made no use of, but may well want; and that in such a case, he who steals, is not obliged to restitution*: Others of them teach, *That he who stole a*

great Sum, is not obliged to the reſtitution of the whole, but only of ſo much as may make the theft not notable: But they teach, *that ſmall thefts, even though often repeated, are but Venial ſins*, which is an excellent Doctrine for warranting Servants inſenſibly to purloin their Maſters goods: They alſo teach Arts of eſcaping juſt Debts, beyond all the ſubtilties of falſe Lawyers; which the Jeſuits themſelves have often put in practice, and have found out Arts for juſtifying oppreſſive Uſury, defrauding of Creditors, ruining of Commerce, and making Havock of our Neighbours Goods without Injuſtice.

For the *ninth Command*, though it be ſo contrary to Nature, that the worſt of men count it a reproach to be charged with Falſhood, and Lying, yet they have favoured it avowedly: For by their Doctrines of Equivocating and uſing Mental Reſervations, the greateſt Falſities in the World may be averred and ſworn without ſin: And the value they ſet on a ſtrict obſervance of Promiſes, and candor in them, appeared at *Conſtance*, where a whole Council required *Sigiſmund* the Emperor, to burn *John Huſs*, and *Jerom of Prague*, though he had given them his ſafe Conduct; for they taught him, *that Faith was not to be kept to Hereticks.* Another ſuch like trip of one of the Popes, *proved fatal both to* Ladiſlaus, *and the Kingdom of* Hungary, *at* Varna; *where they breaking the Truce they had ſworn to the* Turk, *upon the Popes Warrant, were ſignally puniſhed for their treachery.* The Doctors of the forementioned School do alſo teach, that he who hath born falſe Witneſs in a matter that may coſt another his Life, is not bound to retract it, if that retractation may bring great evils upon him. They alſo propoſe methods for ſuborning Witneſſes, and falſifying of Writs and Records, without any ſin; and that all this may be done to defame a perſon with ſome horrid imputation, who is led as a Witneſs to prove any thing againſt one, that thereby he may be caſt from witneſſing.

And as for the *tenth Command*, they have ſtruck out all the firſt motions of the mind to Evil, from being accounted Sins; and by their diviſion of ſins into Venial, and Mortal, they make ſure enough work of this Command, that it ſhall not be broken mortally. It were an endleſs work to go and make out all theſe particulars, of their diſſolving the Moral Law, by clear proofs: but he who deſires ſatisfaction in that, will find it in the *Provincial Letters*, or the *Morals of the Jeſuits*.

But

But if we paſs from the Law, to the Goſpel, we ſhall find they have made no leſs bones of it. We are all over the Goſpel called to be heavenly-minded, to deſpiſe the World, and to ſet our affections on things above; and particularly, Church-men are taught not to ſeek the riches, ſplendor and vanities of a preſent World; which was moſt vigorouſly enforced by the Example of Chriſt and his holy Apoſtles. But how contrary to this is that Religion, whoſe great deſign is, the enriching and aggrandizing of the Teachers and Paſtors of it, chiefly of him who pretends to be the ſupreme and ſole Paſtor? I need not here re-mind the Reader, of the Trade of Indulgences, by which that Church roſe to its riches and pomp; nor need I tell what a value they ſet on outward actions of piety, the chief of theſe being the enriching of Churches, and Abbies; and how theſe were commended to the World as the ſure means of attaining eternal life. Shall I add to this, the viſible and groſs ſecularity and grandeur, in which the Head, and other Prelates of that Church do live? The Head of it being in all things a temporal Prince, perpetually buſied in intrigues of State, and ballancing the *Princes of Europe*, and chiefly of *Italy*; and what baſe and *Simoniacal* practices abound in that Court, all who have written of it with any degrees of Ingenuity, do acknowledg, all things are venal there: Money being able to raiſe the baſeſt and unworthieſt to the higheſt promotions; the *Cardinals* are alſo named either upon the Intereſts of Princes, and chiefly of the two great Crowns; or to make the *Popes Nephews* have a greater ſtroke in the next *Conclave*; or upon ſome ſuch carnal account. And perhaps, for good manners ſake, a Scholar, or a perſon famous for devotion, may get a red Hat, but ſuch are always the leaſt eſteemed in the College; all affairs being governed by the *Popes Nephews*, or the *Protectors of the Crowns*. And who ſhall expect that ſuch a company of ſecular, ignorant, (I mean in matters of Religion) and oftentimes licentious men, ſhould be the great *Sanhedrim*, by whoſe advice all that belongs to Religion muſt be managed? Theſe muſt be likewiſe the Electors of the *Pope*, when the See is vacant; whom they chuſe out of their own number, who is always elected by the prevailing Intereſts of one of the Crowns, or by the Faction of the former Popes Nephews. And what Caballings, what beſpeaking of Suffrages, and what impudent *ambitus* is commonly practiſed in the Elections of Popes, is well enough known, nor

can it be denied. Now, what man of common ſenſe can imagine, that a Pope thus elected by Simoniacal Arts, and carnal Intereſts, can be *Chriſts Vicar on Earth, or have the Holy Ghoſt always affixed to his Chair, that he ſhall never err in any of his Decrees?* Truly, he that can believe this, may believe any thing that is groſs and abſurd. Is not the whole frame and contrivance of that Court turned ſo entirely Secular, that not a veſtige of the Character of a Church, or of Church-men, remains? And to this, ſhall I add all the ſplendor of their Apparel, the ſtate of their Proceſſions, and the Ceremonies of their Coronation, and how they wear a Triple Crown? which being ſo well known to all whoever were at *Rome*, need not be deſcanted on by me. But the mention of the Crown calls me to mind of the literal accompliſhment of that, of *Myſtery, being on the forehead of the Whore*; ſince the word *Myſtery*, was for a great while the Inſcription on the front of their Triple Crown, though it be now altered; which being proved by others, I may not ſtay to make it good. From this I ſhould deſcend to the Cardinals, Biſhops, and Abbots, and ſhew how ſecular they are become; all their deſign being to engroſs the Power, and monopolize all Riches: which contagion is alſo derived into the Inferiour Orders of the Clergy, who by the magnifying of their Images, Saints, and Reliques, uſe all the Arts they can deviſe for enriching of themſelves and their friends. And even thoſe Orders that pretend to mortification, and abandoning the world, and talk of nothing but their poor and auſtere manner of Life, yet have poſſeſſed themſelves of no ſmall part of the Riches and glory of the World. It is true, there is a young Brotherhood among them, which though the youngeſt, yet hath outſtripped the elder, and made them ſtoop to it, and ſerve it. And what baſe and ſordid ways that Society hath purſued, for arriving at the higheſt pitch of greatneſs, and riches, and how ſucceſsfully they have managed their deſigns, is ſufficiently cleared, what through the Zeal of ſome of the honeſter of that Communion, what through the envy of other emulating Orders: All theſe things do fully prove how unlike that Church is to the poor and pure ſimplicity of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and of the firſt Ages of the Church.

If we further examine the Characters of Evangelical purity, we have them from the mouth of our *Saviour*, when he commands us to learn of him, *for he was meek and lowly in heart*; and he

he made it the diſtinguiſhing badge of his Diſciples, that *they loved one another*. Now for humility, it is true the Head of that Church calls himſelf *the ſervant of the ſervants of God*; but how far ſuch humility is from his Deſign, his aſpiring pretences do loudly declare. All the World muſt ſtoop to him; not only muſt his fellow-Biſhops ſwear obedience to him, and become his Vaſſals, but the Kings of the Earth muſt be his footſtool, and all muſt pay him that ſervile homage of kiſſing his foot; an ambition as inſolent as extravagant. His power muſt be magnified with the moſt blaſphemous Titles of *his being God, our Lord God on Earth Omnipotent*; with a great deal more of ſuch ſervile Adulations, offered to him from the Paraſites of that Court. In a word, a great part of that Religion, when rightly conſidered, will be found on deſign contrived and abetted, for exalting him to the higheſt degrees of inſolence: But ſo many proofs of this were already upon other occaſions hinted, that it is needleſs to go over them again; and that ſame leven levens the whole lump of their Clergy; who all pretend, that by their Eccleſiaſtical character they are only ſubject to their Head, and ſo enjoy an immunity from the Civil Authority, be their crimes what they may be. And an in-road on this pretence of late, from the *State of Venice*, when they ſeized two Churchmen that were highly guilty, drew out ſo much of their moſt holy Fathers indignation, that he thundred againſt them, and finding the weakneſs of the *ſpiritual ſword*, reſolved to try the edge of his *temporal one* upon them, in patrociny, partly of theſe Villains, and partly of the covetouſneſs of the Clergy, to which the Senate had ſet a ſmall limit, by a Decree; but finding they were like to prove too hard for him, *he was willing to put up his ſword, rather than to kill and eat, as one of his Cardinals adviſed him.*

Shall I with this alſo tell the inſtances of the ambition of Cardinals, who from their firſt original of being Presbyters of *Rome*, have riſen up to the height of counting themſelves the companions of Kings, and in their habits affect a Princely ſplendor, *but have unluckily choſen the Liveries of the whore; for they wear Scarlet as the Biſhops do Purple, the foretold colours of the Whores Garments.* Shall I next ſhew to what a height of pride the exaltation of the Prieſtly dignity among them hath riſen? as if it were equal, nay, preferrable to the condition of Princes. The Prieſt giving abſolution, is a ſure device to make his power

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be much accounted of, ſince he can forgive ſin. The gorgeous and rich apparel they wear in worſhip, ſerves alſo to ſet off their Dignity. And what a goodly device is it, that their ſpittle muſt make one of the ſacred Rites in Baptiſm? *Certainly that muſt be eſteemed a marvellous holy creature, whoſe very excrements are ſo ſacred.* Their engroſſing the Cup to themſelves from the people, was another trick for raiſing of their eſteem: But above all things, their power of tranſmuting the ſubſtance of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Chriſt, by uttering five words, was a marvellous device, to make all the World admire them, who can ſo eaſily, and every day work a miracle, compared to which, all the miracles of the Goſpel may paſs for ordinary actions. What a great piece of wonder muſt ſuch a man be held to be, who can thus exerciſe his authority over the very perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding of all the glory to which he is now exalted? And it was no contemptible Engine for that ſame deſign, to poſſeſs the people with a belief of the Prieſts offering in the Maſs an expiatory Sacrifice, for the ſins both of the dead and living; which proved a Stock for them to trade on, both for their ambition and covetouſneſs, and from theſe evidences we may infer, how little of the humility of Chriſt appears in the Church, from the higheſt to the loweſt.

The next branch of the Evangelical ſpirit, is Meekneſs and Charity, which leads me unto the conſideration of the fourth Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, which was the uniting of Mankind under one Head, and into one Body; and this it deſigned to effectuate, not only by theſe ſublime Precepts of the higheſt love, and the utmoſt extent of the pardoning of injuries, and of returning them with the beſt offices of love and prayer, which the bleſſed Author of our Faith did enact; but by the aſſociating of the Faithful into one Society, called the *Church*, which was to be united with the cloſeſt bonds of brothely love and charity; and was to be governed by Paſtors and Teachers, who ſhould *feed the flock with the ſincere milk of the Word*; and was alſo to be cemented together by the Ligaments of the holy Sacraments, *by which, as by joynts and bands they are both united to their Head, and knit together.* Now we are from theſe things to conſider what oppoſition that Church we are now conſidering, gives to this branch of the end of Chriſtianity.

 And

And firſt, whereas the Goſpel *pronounceth us free, and that we are no more the ſervants of men, but of God*, if any attempt upon that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, he changeth the authority of the Church into a tyrannical yoke; much more, if all the new articles of belief, and rules for practice, be impoſed under the ſevereſt certificates. But here we are to conſider, that all theſe things which that Church hath impoſed on all of her communion, for which we withdrew from her, are additions to our faith; for in this we mainly differ from that Church, that whatever we acknowled[illegible], they acknowledg likewiſe, but with a great many additions. We believe the Scriptures are a rule for Chriſtians, and they believe the ſame; but they add Traditions, and the authority of the Church to the Scriptures. We believe that God is to be worſhipped ſpiritually, they believe the ſame; but add, that he may be worſhipped by Images and ſenſible Figures. We believe Chriſt to be the Mediator betwixt God and Man, they believe the ſame; but add to this the interceſſion of Saints. We hold that God and Chriſt are to be worſhipped, they hold the ſame; but add Saints and Angels to their worſhip. We believe Heaven and Hell to be the ſeveral States of the future life, they believe the ſame; but add Purgatory betwixt them, to the day of Judgment. We believe Baptiſm and the Lords Supper to be the Sacraments of the new Covenant; they believe the ſame, but add five more. We believe Chriſt is ſpiritually and really preſent in the Lords Supper; this they believe, but add the unconceivable Tenent of his corporal preſence. In a word, it might be inſtanced in many other particulars, how they have driven us from their Communion, by their additions to the truth and ſincerity of the Goſpel, which they have adulterated by their Inventions; and not only have they impoſed all theſe things, but thundered out *Anathema's* on all that queſtion them; and have ſo wreathed all their ſopperies with that main and fundamental article of their belief, of the infallibility of their Church, that it is impoſſible to hope for their recovery, till they renounce that Principle which is ſo dear to them. For if their Church be infallible, then in no matter of faith or practice can ſhe decree amiſs; and therefore the lawfulneſs and ſanctity of all her Decrees muſt be maintained with an equal vigor and zeal; for if in one of them ſhe ſtep aſide, her infallibility is for ever gone. And by this we may ſee to how little purpoſe it is to treat of accomodating matters with that Church,

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ſince there is no poſſibility of our Union with them, without we turn over entirely to them: For they cannot part with one of their errors, without they firſt renounce that which is the deareſt of them all, to wit, the unerring authority of their Church. How cruel then is that Church, which addeth the ſevere ſanction of an Anathema to all her decrees, even about the moſt trifling matters; and about things that are by their Confeſſion, of their own natures indifferent? And a conſectary to this is, that cruel opinion they hold, *that none can be ſaved out of their Communion*; pretending there is no Salvation without the true Church, which they reſtrict to thoſe who are under the obedience of the *Roman* Biſhop; and this is what they uſually frighten all with.

But it is to be conſidered what the true notion of the Church is, that ſo we may ſee through this frightful Vizar. The Church then is, *a Society of Chriſtians united in the ſame faith, for worſhipping of God jointly.* And another definition of a Church cannot be proved from Scripture; for the Church being called the Body of Chriſt, its union with him as its Head, is held forth by the Apoſtle in theſe words, *Col.* 2. 19. *The head Chriſt, from whom the whole body by joints and bonds, having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* From which words we ſee what conſtitutes a man a member of the true Church; which is, firſt, his union to Chriſt as his head, together with a dependance on him for growth and nutriture; and next, his being knit to all others who are thus united to Chriſt; which is firſt, the inward union of divine charity, by which he loves all who cleave to Chriſt as their Head; and next, his aſſociating himſelf with them in outward viſible acts of worſhip, which every Chriſtian is bound to do, with all that worſhip God in Spirit and Truth. But if a Society of Chriſtians do viſibly ſwerve from Chriſt in many great and ſignal contradictions to the honour due to his Perſon, and to the obedience due to his Laws, and do groſly adulterate the worſhip, ſo that communion cannot be had with that Church, without departing from the Head Chriſt, then it can be no departing from the Church, to adhere to Chriſt and his true worſhip, and to ſeparate from the corruptions which are brought in upon the Chriſtian Religion. If then it appear, that the Church of *Rome* hath departed from the truth and ſimplicity of the Goſpel, in ſo many great and main points, thoſe who attempted the re-

reforming her to her firſt Purity, and finding that not to be hoped for, did unite among themſelves for ſerving and worſhipping God aright, cannot be charged with ſeparation from the true Church.

But by that cruel Tenent of theirs, they breed up all their Children in the greateſt uncharitableneſs imaginable, condemning all who cannot believe their ſtrange Doctrines, or concur in their unhallowed worſhip. Thus they are the Schiſmaticks who have departed from the true Church, and who force from their Communion all who adhere to it: but this cruelty reſts not in uncharitable cenſures, but hath extended it ſelf to as much bloody and barbarous rage, as ever ſprung from Hell; for all the cruelty of the heathen Perſecutors, cannot match the practiſes of that Whore that hath been ſo often *drunk with the blood of the Saints, and of the Martyrs of Jeſus*. What enraged cruelty appeared againſt the poor *Waldenſes*, for the ſeparating from their Corruptions? How many of all Sexes and Ages, were cruelly butchered down by the procurement of the Rulers of that Church? and becauſe the *Albigenſes* lived under the protection of Princes that favoured them, how did the Popes depoſe their Princes, and inſtigate other ambitious invaders to ſeize on their dominions: Which to effectuate, a *Croiſſade* was proclaimed, that had been formerly practiſed againſt the Enemies of the Chriſtian Faith, and Heaven was promiſed to ſuch as went againſt theſe poor innocents, whereupon they were killed by thouſands, without all mercy. Never was there any who had the zeal or honeſty in theſe dark ages to witneſs againſt the apoſtacy of the Church, but the Pope and Clergy uſed all means to get his zeal rewarded with a Faggot. And when the time of Reformation came, with what rage and ſpite did the Pope, by his Letters and Legates inſtigate all the Princes of Europe to cruelty againſt them! But as theſe things were not done in corners, ſo they are ſtill ſo freſh in our remembrance, by the copious accounts we have of them, that I need not tell what Arts the Popes and other Eccleſiaſticks uſed, to ſet all *Germany* on fire upon this account: Nor need I tell the cruelty was exerciſed in the *Netherlands* in *Charles* the Fifth his time, in which more than an hundred thouſand are ſaid by *Grotius* to have been butchered on the account of Religion. And in his Son *Philip*'s time, the D. of *Alva* did in a ſhort time cut down Thirty ſix thouſand. Nor need I tell the cruelties were practiſed

in *France* for about fourty years together; nor of that treacherous Maſſacre, wherein there was an equal mixture of perfidy and cruelty, which for all that, was entertained at *Rome* with great joy and applauſes. It will be alſo needleſs to tell of their cruelty in *England* in Queen *Mary*'s days, which was chiefly managed by the Churchmen. And many are yet alive, who remember what enraged cruelty appeared in our Neighbour-Iſland againſt all of our Religion, which did not only flow from the fury of an oppreſſed People, but they were trained, encouraged, and warranted to it, by their Prieſts, and the *Nuntio* who came afterwards among them, diſcovered who was the ſpring of all their motions. Shall I to this add all the private aſſaſſinations committed on that account, which were not only practiſed, but juſtified? I might here congeſt many inſtances, Brother murdering Brother on the account of Religion. Neither is *Clement* a *Dominican, his murdering* Henry *the third, nor* Chaſtlets *attempt, nor* Ravillac's *fact on* Henry *the fourth, forgotten.* Q. Elizabeths *life is full of theſe attempts, and the blackeſt of them all was, the Gunpowder Treaſon:* All which are to be charged on that Church, becauſe the Doctrine of murdering Heretick Princes, was taught, licenſed, printed, and yet not condemned in it. From theſe hints, we may gueſs how much of the lowly, meek, and charitable Spirit is to be found with them, But ſhould I to this add the horrid cruelties exerciſed in theſe Maſſacres, I ſhould be almoſt paſt belief, had I not undeniable Hiſtorians for verifying it; but the mildeſt of them being to be burned alive, we may gueſs what the more ſavage have done by their tortures and lingering Deaths. Next, ſhall I mention their *Courts of Inquiſition* which have been among them in the hands of Churchmen, from the days of their pretended *Saint Dominick*, whoſe Order have been the great Inſtruments of the cruelties of that Church, and whoſe procedure being tied to no forms of equity, or juſtice, is as unjuſt as unmerciful, perſons being haled to their black Courts, upon bare ſuſpitions, or ſecret Informations, without leading of proofs againſt them, are by Torture examined, not only of their own opinions, but of all that are known to them; whoſe Teſtimony, tho drawn from them by cruel Torture, will bring the ſame Tortures on all they delate; neither is there any mercy for any whom this Court declares Heretick, but the Civil Magiſtrate muſt condemn them to the fire. Now what man that conſiders the meekneſs of Chriſt,

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and the Evangelical Spirit, can think that Church the Spouſe of Chriſt, that hath rioted it with ſuch ſavage rage, againſt thouſands of perſons, for no other crime, but becauſe they adhered firmly to the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and would not conſent or concur with theſe ſignal and palpable corruptions with which they have adulterated it.

But as from the conſtitution of their Church, we ſee their deformity from the Goſpel-rule; ſo we will next conſider their Church-men, and we ſhall find how far they have ſtrayed from the firſt Original. Church-men ought to be the Guides and Paſtors of Souls. Now, how little of this there is among them, we will ſoon be reſolved in. What do the Popes about the feeding of Souls? When do they preach the Goſpel? or diſpenſe the Sacraments? Alas! it were below the height of *his Holineſs* to ſtoop to ſuch mean Offices. Does any veſtige of a Church-man remain in that Court? and do they not directly rule in the Spirit of the *Lords of the Gentiles*? And in this the Cardinals, Biſhops, and Abbots, do, to their proportion, imitate their moſt *Holy Father*, abandoning wholly the work of the Goſpel, as if they bore an empty title, or at moſt, were only bound to ſay Maſs on ſome greater Holy-days; but in all other things do avowedly caſt off the care of their Flocks. Shall I here tell of the relaxation of all the ancient rules, about the offices and duty of Church-men, which theſe latter ages have invented, *and mention how children are made Biſhops, how they allow of Pluralities, Non-reſidencies, Unions, Commendams, Gratia expectativa's*, with a great many more corruptions, which are every day authoriſed and granted at *Rome*? and ſo zealous were they for theſe, that they ſtrugled hard againſt the honeſt attempts of ſome at *Trent, who would have had reſidence declared of Divine right, and got it, tho with much ado to be laid aſide.* And thus it is that the Biſhops and Abbots among them do for moſt part relinquiſh their Charges, to live at the Courts of Princes, and inſinuate themſelves upon all affairs and offices: And ſwarms of them go to *Rome*, gaping for preferment there. I deny not but even theſe late ages have produced great men among them, who ſeem to have deſigned the reviving of the Ancient Diſcipline, both among the Clergy and the People; but as theſe inſtances are rare, ſo they were hated and perſecuted at *Rome* for their Zeal. Witneſs the condemning of *Arnolds Book of frequent Communion*, and the ſeverity *Janſenius*,

and the *Abbot* of St. *Cyran*, *with their followers, have met with*: And thus whatever individuals that Church may have produced, yet the corruptions I have hinted, are notoriouſly, publickly; and generally practiſed in it, and no where ſo avowedly, as at the Court of *Rome*. But to compence this defect of the Superior Clergy, they have ſwarms of the inferior ranks every where, both ſecular and regular, who ſeem to mind the care of ſouls very ſeriouſly. But not to reflect again upon any thing hath been hitherto ſaid of their bad conduct of ſouls, I ſhall now only take notice of the Authority they pretend to, as if the People were bound blindly to follow their Confeſſors direction, as the voice of God, which clearly makes them the ſervants of men, and ſubjects them to the heavieſt yoke, which is moſt directly contrary to the *liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free:* And what a rack to ſouls have they made Confeſſion? and what an Engine to get into the ſecrets of all the World, and to bring mankind under their ſubjection, is obvious enough to any that conſiders it: And to enforce it the more, as they teach it ſimply neceſſary to Salvation, ſo the authority they made the World believe the Prieſts were veſted with for pardoning ſin, together with their eaſie Pardons, and ſlight Penances, did root it deep in the hearts of all of that Communion.

But I go next to examine the Sacraments, of which ſo much being ſaid already, little remains to be added. By their dividing the Cup from the Bread, they deſtroy Chriſts Inſtitution, and ſo make it no Sacrament; and the hearing of Maſs without communicating, tho it make up the greateſt part of their worſhip, yet is purely a ſervice of their own deviſing, without warrant from Chriſts Inſtitution, who ſaid, *take eat, this is my Body*; thereby ſhewing, he intended the virtue and benefit of that Ordinance, only for thoſe who received it. And in a word, let any read and compare the Inſtitution of the Lords Supper, as it is in *the three Goſpels, and the Epiſtle to the Corinthians*, together with the whole office of the Maſs, as it is in the Roman Church, and then let him on his Conſcience paſs his verdict, whether they have adhered to, or departed from Chriſt's Inſtitution in that piece of their worſhip. Finally, one great end of all ſolemn worſhip, being the Communion of Saints, in their joint adorations, and mutual concurrence in divine ſervices, What union can they have with God? Or what communion can they hold one with ano-

ther, who perform all their Worſhip in an unknown Tongue, which is the rule and conſtant practice of that Church beyond Sea; tho for the better venting of their ſophiſticated ſtuff among us, they give the people Books of devotion in their vulgar Language, yet continue to ſay the Office of the Maſs in *Latin*.

And thus far I have run a round that great Circle I propoſed to my ſelf in the beginning of this Diſcourſe: And have examined the chief Deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion, and have found the great and evident contradictions, given to them in all their branches, by the eſtabliſhed and authoriſed Doctrines and Practiſes of that Church; in which I have fully juſtified the wiſe mans obſervation, that *he who increaſeth knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow*; and have ſaid enough to evince to all rational and conſidering minds, how unſafe it is for any that would keep a good Conſcience, to hold Communion with them. But I have not finiſhed my deſign, till I likewiſe examine the Characters of the Chriſtian Religion, and compare them with theſe that are to be found in the Synagogue of *Rome*.

The firſt Character of our Faith is, That it was delivered to the world by men ſent of God, and divinely inſpired, who proved their Miſſion by Miracles. Now theſe Doctrines about which we differ from that Church, can pretend to no ſuch divine original: Let them tell us what inſpired man did firſt teach the worſhip of Images, of the Maſs, of Angels and Saints, and of Reliques; What man ſent of God was the firſt Author of the belief of the Corporal Preſence, of the Sacrifice of the Maſs, of the Pope's Supremacy, of Puagatory, of Indulgences, and of all theſe innumerable Superſtitions, of which the Scripture is abſolutely ſilent; for if theſe Doctrines were not the off-ſpring of Revelations, they are none of the Oracles of God, nor can we be obliged to believe them as ſuch. It is true, they vouch Scriptures for proof to ſome of theſe, but theſe are ſo far ſtretched, that their ſure Retreat is in the Sanctuary of the Churches Traditions; but till a clear Warrant be produced for proving it was impoſſible that any Falſhood could have that way crept into the World, we muſt be excuſed from believing theſe. Neither is it poſſible to know what Traditions came from the Apoſtles, for as the Vulgar are not capable of purſuing the Enquiry, ſo the loſs of moſt of the Writings of the firſt two Ages, makes it impoſſible to know what Traditions came from the Apoſtles.

But

But this I ſay not, that we need fear the Trial; for the ſilence of the firſt and pureſt Ages, about theſe things which are controverted among us, is evidence enough that they were not known to them; eſpecially, ſince in their Apologies which they wrote to the Heathens for their Religion and worſhip, wherein they give an abſtract of their Doctrines, and a Rubrick of their Worſhip, they never once mention theſe great Evils, for which we now accuſe that Church. It is true, a late ingenious Writer, whoſe ſincere zeal and candor had much offended the *Roman* Court, and drawn cenſures on himſelf and his Book, took a way to repair his Reputation by a new Method of proving the truth of the Opinions held in the *Roman* Church; which was, that ſince the preſent Church held them, that ſhews that they had them ſo from their Anceſtors, and they from theirs, till you run backwards to the days of the Apoſtles; alledging, that a change in the worſhip was unpracticable, ſince it could not be done in a corner, but in the view of all the World, who it is not to be imagined were capable of ſuffering any great or conſiderable change to be made in that which was daily in their view, and much in their eſteem; therefore he concludes, that every Generation adhered to that belief in which they were born, and ſo no change in any great ſubſtantial and viſible part of worſhip could be made. It is true, he applies this only to the belief of the corporal Preſence, which he attempts to prove could never have been introduced into the Church, had it not been conveyed down from the Apoſtles. He hath indeed ſet off this with all the beauties of wit, and elegancies of ſtile, and much profound reading. But with how great and eminent advantages, both of reaſon and learning, this pretence hath been baffled, I leave it to the judgment of all who have been ſo happy as to read Mr. *Claud* his incomparable Writings. And the common ſenſe of mankind will prove this but an Impoſture, how fairly ſoever adorned; for if we find it certain, that any Doctrines, or main parts of Worſhip are now received into that Church, and if from the undeniable Evidences of Hiſtory, and Writings of Ancients, it appear, that theſe things were not received in the ancient Church, then it is certain there hath been a change made from what was then, to what is now, though an ingenious Invention may make it appear very difficult to imagine how and when the change came in; eſpecially when it was inſenſibly, and by pieces advanced. If then it be proved,

that the Fathers believed the Elements in the Sacrament were really Bread and Wine, and not changed from their own nature, but only Types and Figures of the Body of Chriſt, then we are ſure a change muſt have been made, though the ignorance of ſome Ages makes it a hard task to clear all particulars about it. It is true, the Fathers did highly magnifie this Sacrament, with many Expreſſions, which (though the vehemence of Divine Rhetorick can well juſtifie, yet) will not bear a Logical *Examen*; but when they ſpeak in a cooler ſtile, nothing can be more clear, than that they believed not the corporal Preſence. But may not that reaſoning of the impoſſibility of a change in a worſhip, be as well applied to the taking the Chalice from the People, who in reaſon ſhould be imagined ſo tenacious of ſo great a Priviledge, that no conſideration ſhould have obliged them to part with it? And yet we know, nor do they deny, how it was wrung from them about 250 years ago. What may ſeem leſs credible than for the People to conſent, to have their worſhip in an unknown Tongue, and yet we know that all once worſhipped in their Mother Tongue; but that after (by the overthrow of the *Roman* Empire) the Latin Tongue decayed, the barbarous worſhip was obtruded on the world? And what piece of worſhip is both more viſible, and more contrary to the cleareſt Evidence of Scriptures, eſpecially to the Commandments, in which the people were always inſtructed, than the worſhipping of Images? And though we know well enough that for the firſt ſeven Centuries the Chriſtian World abhorred them, yet within a hundred years after that, we find a great part of it bewitched with them. And what can be thought more uneaſie for the world to have received, than the Popes abſolute Authority over all the Churches and States of the world? One ſhould think that though Religion and Reaſon had lien out of the way, yet Intereſt and Ambition had withſtood this: Yet we ſee clearly by what ſteps they crept up, from being Biſhops of the Imperial City, in an equality of power with their neighbouring Biſhops, into that culminating height, to which they have now mounted. In a word, we refuſe not to appeal to the firſt four Ages of the Church, in theſe matters that we quarrel the Roman Church for; We deny not but humane infirmity began ſoon to appear in the Church, and a care to gain on the Heathens, made them quickly fall upon ſome Rites, and uſe ſome terms, which after-ages corrupted. But the ruin of

Religion

Religion was, when the Roman Empire being overturned by the incurſion of the Northern Nations, in the beginning of the fifth Century, both Piety and Religion being ſaid to ſleep, inſtead of the Primitive ſimplicity of the faith and worſhip of the Chriſtians, they turned all their zeal to the adorning of the outwards of Religion, and hence the corruptions of the Church took their riſe.

But I had almoſt forgot to name ſome Revelations which that Church pretends to, even for ſome of her moſt doubtful opinions: Which are the Viſions and extraordinary Inſpirations of ſome of their Saints, from which they vouch a divine confirmation to their Doctrines; I confeſs there is a great deal of extraordinary Viſions, Raps and Extaſies to be met with among the lives of their Saints; and I fear a great deal more than truth: For really whoſo will but read theſe writings, he muſt confeſs they are ſo far from being probable, or well contrived, that they ſpeak out their forgery. Alas! whereas St. *Paul* being put to glory, of Viſions and Revelations, was to run back fourteen years for one; their Saints are found in them every day. Are they not very credible Stories they tell of Chriſt's appearing to ſome of their She-Saints, and kiſſing them, giving them Rings, being married to them, and celebrating nuptial Rites, making them drink out of his ſide, and leaving on them the prints of his wounds, with many other ſuch like apparitions of the Virgin, and other Saints, which were either forgeries, dreams, or the effects of melancholly, or hiſterical diſtempers; and yet theſe extravagant Fables are given out to the people, as ſacred pieces of Divine Revelations.

But the inſpiration of the holy Writers, on which we found our Faith, was proved by their Miracles which they wrought publickly in the ſight of many, and in the preſence of their Adverſaries, many of whom were convinced by them; and it is certain, that whoſoever offers any thing to anothers belief, pretending he comes to him in the Name of God, muſt have ſome evident proof of his Divine Miſſion, ſince none are bound to believe him barely on his own teſtimony, otherwiſe there ſhould be no end of Impoſtures, if every pretender to Divine Inſpiration were to be believed without proof. Now the way it muſt be proved is, by ſome evidence of God's extraordinary aſſiſting ſuch a perſon, which appeared always either in Propheſies or Miracles, but chiefly in Miracles under the New-Teſtament; and therefore both Chriſt and his Apoſtles appeal to the mighty works they wrought, as the great confirmation of their

their Doctrine. If then there be new Doctrines brought into the Church, they muſt have the like confirmation, otherwiſe they are not to be believed.

But here thoſe of that Church think they triumph; for Miracles they have in abundance; not a Relique they have, but hath wrought mighty wonders; nor a Countrey-Saint, but the Curate of the place can gravely tell a great many deeds of his Puiſſance; nor want the Images their marvellous Atchievements, but wondrouſly wondrous are the Feats the Hoſty hath performed. Here I am upon a ſad ſubject of that trade of lies and fictions, wherewith the *Merchants of that Babylon have ſo long traffiqued*, of which the ſincerer among themſelves are aſhamed. How ridiculous are many of their miraculous Narrations? Was it a worthy piece of the Angelical Miniſtration, for Angels to go trotting over Sea and Land with a Load of Timber and Stones of the *Virgins Houſe*, till at length they ſet it down at *Loretto*, that great Devotions might be ſhown to it? It is a goodly ſtory for to tell of a Saint that walked ſo far after his Head was cut off, with it in his Arms, reſting in ſome places to draw breath; yet he will paſs for an Infidel that ſhould doubt of this at St. *Denis-Church*. Who can look on the Lives of the late Saints of that Church without nauſea? *Gregories Dialogues* begun this trade, which indeed hath thriven well ſince. The Miracles of the Chriſtian Faith were grave and ſolemn actions; but what ridiculous ſcenical ſtories, not to ſay blaſphemous ones, meet us about the Miracles of their Saints? He that would know this, may read the Lives of St. *Francis*, and St. *Dominic*, St. *Bridgit*, and the two St. *Catherines*, and he will be ſatisfied to a ſurfeit. The Miracles alſo of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were acted publickly, in the view of all; but moſt of theſe Narrations of their Wonders were tranſacted in corners, none being witneſſes but perſons concerned to own the Cheat: And the Doctrine of Equivocating was a good Cordial for the eaſe of their Conſciences, though they ſwore what they knew falſe, according to the natural ſenſe of the words which they uttered. Thus we have many Fables of Chriſts appearing in the Hoſty, ſometimes as a Child, and ſometimes as crucified, when but a very few of the whole company preſent, were honoured with that amazing ſight.

Further, The Miracles of the Chriſtian Faith were written in the times in which they were acted, that ſo enquiries might have

been made into their Falſhood; and the Powers that then governed, being enemies to the Faith, it was ſafe for its oppoſers to have proved and diſcovered their Forgery, had any ſuch been. But many of the Miracles of *Rome* are not heard of, till ſome Ages, at leaſt Years, be paſt, whereby they are ſecure from the after-game of a diſcovery; and he were a ſtout man that would adventure to queſtion the verity of theſe pretences at *Rome*, where it is the intereſt of that Church to have them all believed, without once queſtioning them. But how comes it, that in Hereticall Countries (as they call them) where there is more need of thoſe Miracles, and where they might be more irrefragably proved, if true, ſince the Examiners of them were not to be ſuſpected, *yet none of theſe mighty works do ſhew themſelves forth?* Certainly, that they are to this day ſo riſe in *Italy* and *Spain*, and ſo ſcant in *Britain*, is a ſhrewd ground to apprehend *Legerdemain*, and forgery, in the accounts we get of their later Saints. And indeed the Contrivers of theſe Stories have not managed their deſign by half, ſo well as need was; for they have beſtowed as many of them on one perſon, as might have Sainted the half of an Order. But the gain that is made by new Saints, and new Reliques, is well enough known; not to ſpeak of the general advantage that Church pretends to draw from it.

In end, tho ſome things among them did ſeem to ſurpaſs the known powers of Nature, theſe ought not to prevail upon us for departing from the truth; *ſince though an Angel from Heaven Preached another Goſpel, he is to be accurſed*, Gal. 1. 8. If then they have ſo changed the Chriſtian Doctrine by their Additions and Inventions, that it is become thereby as another Goſpel; none of the ſeemingly Seraphical Appearances they may have among them, tho true, ought to reconcile us to it; and that the rather, ſince we were expreſly guarded againſt this Impoſture, by St. *Paul*, *who gave it as an Indication of the Son of Perdition, that his coming was after the power of Satan, with all power and ſigns, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 9, 10. And it is a part of their curſe, that they are given up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies: *the Beaſt alſo that appeared to St.* John, *Rev.* 13. 13. *did great wonders, ſo that he made Fire come down from Heaven, in the ſight of men, and deceived many that dwelt on the Earth, by theſe Miracles which he had power to do.* But to conclude this, my greateſt quarrel at theſe forgeries of Miracles is, that the People being

taught

taught to believe them, and the Miracles of the Goſpel, with an equal certainty, ſince they have the Teſtimony of the Church for both; and they ſeeing ſuch evident Characters of fraud and forgery on theſe ſuppoſed Miracles, whereby they are convinced of their falſhood, are thereby in danger of ſuſpecting all the Miracles of the Goſpel, as the tricks of ſubdolous and crafty men; whereby they run head-long to an Atheiſtical disbelieving the truth of all alike. And thus far we have found how oppoſite that Church is, to the Spouſe of Chriſt, ſince her Doctrines are ſo ill founded, and look ſo like cunningly deviſed Fables, without the authority of Divine Inſpiration, or the proof of true Miracles.

The next Character of our Faith is, its perſpicuity, and ſimplicity, all being called to the clear light of the day in it, and every part of it being ſo genuine, that it is apparent, it was not the contrivance of deſigning men, that by the belief of it they might obtain the power, and poſſeſs the riches of the World: And therefore there are no ſecret Doctrines in our Faith, which muſt be kept up from the Vulgar, whereby the Paſtors of Chriſtendom may have dominion over their Souls. But what muſt we conclude of them, who by all means ſtudy to keep all of their Communion ignorant, as if Devotion were thereby nouriſhed; and allow them not the uſe of the Scriptures in their Mother-tongue, nor a worſhip which they can underſtand, whereby it is, that they who *occupy the room of unlearned, cannot ſay* Amen, *at the giving of thanks, ſince they underſtand not what is ſaid.* To this might be added their implicite Faith, to all the Doctrines of the Church, without further inquiries; and their blind obedience to the *Confeſſarius*, be he never ſo ignorant and carnal. Theſe are certainly darkening opinions and practiſes, and far different from the methods of the Apoſtles, in preaching the Goſpel, who withheld from the People nothing of the Counſel of God, and ſtudied the enlightening their underſtandings, as well as the enlivening of their wills.

But further, how much of intereſt appears in the Doctrines of *Rome*, which tend to the exalting or enriching the Papacy, and inferiour Clergy; for it is viſible what a trade they drive by them, and all the contrivances, all the projectors in *Europe* ever fell upon for enriching their Maſter's Treaſury, falls ſhort of the projects of Purgatory, the Treaſure of the Church, Indulgences, and the Pope's abſolute authority, in making, abrogating, and diſpencing with all Poſitive Laws. Neither is there more of deſign to be found

in the *Alcoran*, than in the Myſteries of that *Caliph* of the *Spiritual Babylon*. And we may gueſs of their concernedneſs in theſe matters, ſince a gentler cenſure may be hoped for upon the violation of the greateſt of the Laws of God, than upon the leaſt contradiction to their idolized Intereſt. The one is the conſtant ſubject of their Studies, and Sermons, whereas the other is ſeldom minded.

The third Character of our Faith, is, that it is rational and ſuitable to our Souls, God having fitted it, and framed them ſo harmoniouſly, that they are congenial one to another. It is true, the Myſteries about God and Chriſt are exalted above the reach of our faculties, but even reaſon it ſelf teacheth that it muſt be ſo, ſince if there be a God, he muſt be infinite and incomprehenſible; and therefore it is not to be wondered, if the Scriptures offer ſome Myſteries to us about God and Chriſt, which choak and ſtifle the impreſſions we are apt to take of things. But in theſe, it is viſible, that the Object is ſo diſproportioned to our faculties, that it is impoſſible we can reach or comprehend it; but as for the other parts of Religion, they are all ſo diſtinctly plain, that the reaſonableneſs, as well as the authority of them, ſerve to commend them to us; but how void are they of this, who have made one of the chief Articles of their Faith, and the greateſt matter of their Worſhip, that which is, not only beyond, but contrary to, the moſt common impreſſions of Nature, which teacheth us to believe our Senſes when under no leſion, and duly applied to a proper object. For indeed, in that caſe, we cannot really doubt but things are as they appear to us; for we cannot believe it mid-night, when we clearly ſee the Sun in the Meridian; nay, and our Faith reſts on the evidences our Senſes give, ſince we believe, becauſe Miracles were clearly ſeen by theſe who firſt received the Faith: And, *Chriſt ſaid, believe me, for the very works ſake*, John 14. 11. And ſo their ſight of theſe Works was a certain ground for their belief, therefore the Senſes unvitiated, fixing on a proper object, through a due mean, are infallible; therefore what our ſight, our taſte, and our touch, tell us, is Bread and Wine, muſt be ſo ſtill, and cannot be imagined to have changed its ſubſtance, upon the recital of the five words. Shall I add to this, that throng of abſurdities which croud about this opinion? For if it be true, then a body may be in more places at once, triumphing in glory in one, and ſacrificed in a thouſand other places: And a large body may be crouded into

the narrow ſpace of a thin Wafer, they holding it to be not only wholly in the whole Wafer, but alſo intirely in every crumb of it: A body can be without dimenſions, and accidents without a ſubject; theſe muſt be confeſſed to be among the higheſt of unconceivables; and yet theſe Miracles muſt be believed to be produced every day, in above a hundred thouſand places. Certainly, he hath a ſturdy belief, who can ſwallow over all theſe abſurdities without choaking on them.

It is little leſs unconceivable to imagine, that a man of no eximious ſanctity (nay, perhaps of noted impiety) nor extraordinarily knowing (nay, perhaps groſly ignorant) in Theological Matters, ſhall have the Holy Ghoſt ſo abſolutely at his command, that whatever he decrees, muſt be the Dictates of the Spirit. And what an unconceivable myſtery is the Treaſure of the Church, and the Popes Authority to diſpence it as he will? No leſs conceivable is the efficacy of the Sacraments, by the work wrought; nor is any thing more affronting to reaſon, than the barbarous worſhip. And of a piece with this is the blind ſubjection pleaded for the *Confeſſarius* his Injunctions, and their opinions of expiating their ſins by a company of little trifling penances, which tend not to the cleanſing the Soul, nor killing of the life of Sin, much leſs can be able to appeaſe God, either of their own inbred worth, or by reaſon of any value God is pleaſed to ſet on them, either by Command or Promiſe. But ſhould I reckon up every thing is among them that choaks reaſon, I ſhould dwell too long on this, and reckon over moſt of the things have been through the whole Diſcourſe hinted, which ſeem to ſtand in the moſt diametrical oppoſition to the cleareſt impreſſions of all mens reaſons.

But to bring my Enquiry to an iſſue, Eaſineſs and gentleneſs are by Chriſt applied to his yoke, laws, and burden; and whatever oppoſition or trouble they may give to the carnal man, by mortifying his luſts, and contradicting all his inordinate and unlimited deſires, yet by the rational faculties and powers they are both eaſily underſtood and practiſed. Indeed Religion lies in few things, and its chief work is the reforming and purifying the inward man, where it mainly dwells and exerts its force and virtue; but theſe who have added ſo much, both to be believed and done, beyond what our Lord preſcribed, as they accuſe his unfaithfulneſs, ſo bring unſupportable burdens on the Conſciences

of

of Chriſtians: Theſe therefore who lead out the mind, by preſenting a great many foreign objects to it, do introduce ſuperannuated Judaiſm, inſtead of that liberty Chriſt brought with him unto the World. But ſhall I number up here all the Impoſitions of that Church, whoſe numbers are great as well as their nature grievous; for it is a ſtudy to know them all: But what a pain muſt it be to perform them? It is a work which will take up a great deal of time to underſtand the *Rubricks of their Miſſals, Breviaries, Rituals*, and *Pontificals*. In a word, they have left the purity and ſimplicity of Religion, and ſet up inſtead of it a lifeleſs heap of Ordinances, which muſt oppreſs, but cannot relieve the Conſciences of their Diſciples.

Shall I add to this, the ſeverity of ſome of their Orders, into which by unalterable Vows they are engaged their whole lives? Now whatever fitneſs might be in ſuch Diſcipline, upon occaſions, for beating down the body, or humbling of the mind, yet it muſt be very tyrannical to bind the perpetual obſervance of theſe on any by an Oath; for thereby all the reſt of their lives may become inſupportably bitter to them, wherein they ſtand obliged, under perjury, to the perpetual obſervance of ſome ſevere Diſcipline; which, tho at firſt in a novitious fervour, might have had its good effects on them; yet that drying up, it will afterwards have no other effect but the conſtant dejecting of the ſoul, and ſo their life will be a rack to them by their perpetual toil in theſe auſterities. This I ſpeak of thoſe who ſeem the chief Ornaments of that Church, whoſe Devotion doth for moſt part turn to outwards, and reſts in the ſtrict obſervance of their rules, not without voluntary aſſumed mortifications, which they add to them, but wherein they for moſt part glory, and ſo the life of pride and ſelf-love (the ſubtilleſt of all our enemies) is fed and nouriſhed by them: Neither can we think that theſe, whoſe exerciſes are ſo much external, can be ſo recollected for the inward and ſerene breathings of the Mind after God and Chriſt, without which all externals, tho they ſeem to make a *fair ſhew in the fleſh*, yet are but a skelet of lifeleſs and inſipid things. But indeed they have ſtudied to remove this objection of the uneaſineſs of their Religion, by accommodating it ſo, that the worſt of men may be ſecure of Heaven, and enjoy their luſts both, according to the corrupt conduct of ſome of their ſpiritual Fathers: But what I have hinted of the uneaſineſs of their Religion, is taken from the

the Nature of their Devotions, in their higheſt altitude and elevation.

And thus far I have purſued my Deſign, in the tract whereof I have not been void of a great deal of pain and ſorrow; For what pleaſure can any find by diſcovering ſo much wickedneſs, and ſo many errors in the Chriſtened Regions of the World; and ſee the holy and beautiful Places, wherein the former Ages worſhipped God in the Spirit, turned to be habitations of Idols and graven Images, by which God is provoked to jealouſie. God is my witneſs, how theſe thoughts have entertained me with horror and regret all the while I have conſidered them: And that I am ſo far from being glad that I have found ſo much corruption in the *Roman* Church, that it is not without the greateſt antipathy to my nature, imaginable, that I have payed this duty to truth, by aſſerting it with the diſcovery of ſo many Impoſtures, which have ſo long abuſed the Chriſtian world; and if any heat or warmth hath ſlipped from my Pen, I muſt proteſt ſincerely, it is not the effect of anger or paſſion, but of a tender and zealous compaſſion, for thoſe ſouls who are either already blinded with theſe deluſions, or do incline towards *thoſe paths which lead to the chambers of death.*

I am none of thoſe who juſtify rage or bitterneſs againſt thoſe in errors; for if we had the the Spirit of Chriſt in us, we ſhould mourn over, and lament their miſery, who lie under ſo much darkneſs. And this is a ſure character to judge if our zeal for God and his truth be Divine and Evangelical, if it make us pour out Rivers of tears for thoſe that have gone out of the way, rather than ſtreams of fire againſt them. That Zeal which raiſeth melting ſorrow, tender compaſſion, and fervent prayers for thoſe we ſee erring, is Chriſt-like, and worthy of that meek and charitable ſpirit which the Goſpel ſo much recommends: Whereas that which boils out in rage and foam againſt ſuch as err, and deſigns their ruin and miſchief, and ſtudies how to perſecute, rather than convert them, and kindles in men a bitter averſion to their perſons, together with rude harſhneſs in their behaviour to them, is all Antichriſtian and carnal. My deſign therefore in this diſcourſe is to provoke pity rather than wrath, and tears more than flames, towards thoſe deceived multitudes, that we may pray for them, rather than rail at them.

But

But my chief aim is to perſuade all who love their ſouls, to conſider the danger of continuing in the Communion of a Church, that hath not only fallen from her firſt love and purity, but hath in ſo many great and eſſential points corrupted our moſt holy Faith, and adulterated the pure ſincerity of our worſhip.

I ſhall not here ſearch into the depths of the Mercies of God, how far they may reach any of that Communion, nor examine how far they hold the Foundation Chriſt, notwithſtanding of all the baſe ſuperſtructures they have reared upon it; nor ſhall I conſider how far invincible ignorance may excuſe the guilt of an Error, nor how applicable this may be to them; nor ſhall I diſcuſs how far the private differing from theſe Errors may in many things ſecure ſome of the individuals of that Communion from the general guilt that lies over them; upon all theſe particulars many things may be ſaid, and none alive is more willing to ſtretch his Invention, for finding out grounds to fix his Charity on, than my ſelf. But all I can deviſe falls ſhort of a full and ſatisfying excuſe for thoſe who being educated in the knowledge of the truth and ſincerity of the Goſpel, do fall away into the Errors and Superſtitions of that Church; nor can I imagine what their temptations ſhould be to it, except one of two: The firſt is, that they deſire a ſenſible Religion, and therefore loath the ſimplicity and ſpirituality of the Goſpel, and love to have ſome glorious objects in Worſhip to ſtrike on, and affect their ſenſes: But however this may make impreſſions on the groſſer Rabble, yet certainly, any that conſiders that the perfection of man lies in his Reaſon, and not in his outward ſenſes, and that the exaltation of Reaſon is Religion; he muſt confeſs that the leſs it dwell in the ſenſes, and the more inward it become on the reaſon, it is the more ſuitable both to the Nature of God, of Religion, and of the rational Faculties. But the other conſideration that may draw many to that Religion, is yet worſe, which is, becauſe in it a great allowance is given to all manner of ſin, by the treacherous conduct of ſome Confeſſors, who perſuade men of Heaven, on terms very eaſie and pleaſing to Fleſh and Blood. And hence it is that we ſee very few who have expreſſed any affection to a devout life, abandoning us to go over to the *Roman Communion*, moſt of thoſe who do ſo (except it be one of a thouſand) being as void of vertue, as ignorant of the nature of true Religion; that we may ſay, Joh. 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they*

they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they had not gone out from us.

These being the only visible tentations to entice any from our Communion to theirs, it is hard to preserve any great degrees of Charity for them: For a third tentation being that only which can work on a devout mind, takes with so few among us, that I need scarce name it, which is the solitary and retired houses among them for leading a devout and strict life, and the excellent Books of Devotion have been published by many of that Communion. This I know wrought mightily on one, and made him many times wish that he could with a good Conscience throw himself into one of these Religious Houses; but the consideration of these great Corruptions lay so in his way, that without the doing the greatest force on his Conscience imaginable, and thereby securing damnation to himself by complying with things he judged so damnable, he durst not do it. Yet for his further satisfaction, he went among them, to see if their Worship appeared more amiable in practise, than it did in Writings; but I have heard him often declare, that though his mind was as free of prepossessions, as perhaps ever man's was, yet all he conceived of them, even from the Writings of their Adversaries, was nothing compared to the impressions which the sight of their Worship left upon him, it appearing so Histrionical in all its circumstances, and so idolatrous in its substance, especially as he saw the vulgar practise it. And for their Religious Houses, he was among a great many of all Orders, but was far from meeting with that spirit of devotion he had hoped to find among them, for they always magnified their Order, and the little external Austerities and Devotions of it; but for genuine humility, a delight in God, and Christ, abstraction from the World, (for all their frocks and retirements) sincere heavenly-mindedness, and fervent Charity to the Brethren, he regrated he had met with little of it among them. And that he found the several Orders full of emulation and envy at other Orders, and of heats among themselves, which made him see, that he who meant to lead a devout life, must chuse another Sanctuary than any of these he saw in that Communion.

I deny not, that it is the greatest defect of the Reformation, that there are not in it such encouragements to a devout life; though the intanglements of Vows to things without our power, is a manifest invasion of the Christian liberty; and to languish out ones

life in a tract of lazy Devotion, without ſtudying to ſerve God in our Generation, ſeems contrary to the intendment of Religion, a great many of its Precepts being about thoſe Duties we owe our Neighbours: Yet for all this, it is not to be denied to be a great defect that we want recluſe Houſes, for a ſtricter training up of thoſe who deſign to lead a ſpiritual life, and to ſerve in the Goſpel, that their minds being rightly formed before their firſt ſetting out, they may be well qualified and furniſhed for their work. Such Houſes might alſo be retreating places for old Perſons, after they had ſerved their Generation, and were no more able to undergo toil and fatigue; they might be alſo Sanctuaries for devout Perſons, in times of their greater afflictions or devotions. But for all this want, it fixeth no imputation on our Church, her Doctrine, or Worſhip, that ſhe is ſo poor, as not to be able to maintain ſuch Seminaries. But on the way, it is no great character of the Piety of their Church, that ſhe abounds ſo with great and rich donations, when we conſider the Arts they uſed for acquiring them, by making People believe themſelves ſecure of Heaven by ſuch donations: Indeed, had we got our People befooled into ſuch perſuaſions, the cheat might have proſpered as well in our hands; but we are not of thoſe, *who handle the Word of God deceitfully*; nor will we draw the People even to do good with a crafty guile, *or lye for God.*

But now, as a concluſion to this Diſcourſe, I muſt conſider, if all things among us be ſo ſound and well grounded, that with a quiet Mind and good Conſcience every one may hold Communion with our Church, and hope for Salvation in it, I ſhall therefore briefly run over the Nature and Characters of the Chriſtian Faith, to ſee if any contradiction to them, or any part of them, be found among us. And firſt of all, we worſhip God in Spirit, as a Spiritual Being, with ſuitable Adorations, which we direct to no Image nor Symbol of the Divine Preſence, but teach, that we ought not to figure God to any corporeal being, no not in our thoughts; neither do we worſhip any, beſide God the Father, Son, and Spirit: We alſo worſhip Chriſt, but as he is God, and hath the fulneſs of the God-head dwelling in him bodily: Angels indeed we honour, but knowing them to be our fellow-ſervants, we cannot pray to them, or fall down before them: We count the holy Virgin *bleſſed among women*, but dare give her no ſhare of the glory due to her Son: All the Saints we reverence

rence and love, but knowing God to be a *jealous God*, we cannot divide that honour among them, which is only due to him, and therefore do neither worſhip them, their Images, nor their Reliques. We deſire alſo to offer up to God ſuch Sacrifices as we know are well-pleaſing to him, *Prayers, Praiſes, broken and contrite Hearts, and our Souls and Bodies*, but reject all Charms and Enchantments from our Worſhip, as contrary to the *reaſonable ſervice which is acceptable to God*, and do retain the genuine ſimplicity of the Goſpel-worſhip, in a plain and intelligible ſtile and form, without any mixtures drawn from Judaiſm or Gentiliſm: And thus there is nothing among us contrary to the firſt deſign of Religion.

And as little will be found againſt the ſecond, which is the honour due to Chriſt in all his Offices: We teach our People to ſtudy the Scriptures, and to examine all we ſay by them, and exhort them to depend on God, who by his Spirit will teach them as well as us; neither do we pretend to an authority over their Conſciences, but acknowledg our ſelves men of like infirmities with the People, who are all called to be a *Royal Prieſthood*; and thus we honour Chriſt's Prophetical Office, by founding our Faith only on the Divine Authority of the Scriptures. *We alſo believe, there is no Name given under Heaven by which we can be ſaved, but the Name of Chriſt, who laid down his Life a ranſom for our Souls, that by his Croſs we might be reconciled to God*; and it is to that one Sacrifice, that we teach all to fly for obtaining remiſſion of ſins, and the favour of God, truſting only to it, and to nothing we have done or can do; knowing that when we have done all we can do, *we are but unprofitable ſervants*; much leſs do we hope for any thing from any of our Fellow-creatures: We apply our Souls to no Interceſſor but Chriſt, and truſt to no Satisfaction but his, and we acknowledg him the only King of his Church, whoſe Laws muſt bind it to the end of the World. Neither do we acknowledg any other Authority, but his, over our Conſciences. It is true, in things indifferent, he hath left a power with his Church to determine in thoſe Matters, which may tend to advance order, edification, peace and decency; but as the Church cannot add to our Faith, ſo neither can it inſtitute new pieces of Worſhip, which ſhall commend us to God, or bind any load upon our Souls. We own a Miniſterial Authority in all the Paſtors of the Church, which they derive from Jeſus Chriſt, and not from any

visible Head on Earth, and therefore they are only subject to Christ. We also hold, that the Civil Powers are of Christ, whose Gospel binds the duty of obedience to them more closely on us; and therefore if they do wrong, we leave them to Christ's Tribunal, who set them up, but pretend to no power from his Gospel to coerce or resist them; and thus we honour Christ in all his Offices, and so are conform to the second branch of the design of our Faith.

We also receive the third with the same fidelity; and whatever the practices of too too many among us be, yet there is no ground to quarrel our Doctrine; we preach repentance to all, and study to convince them of their misery, and lost estate, that they may mourn for their sins, and turn to God by a new course of life; we preach Faith through Christ in God, as that which unites our souls to him, by which we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. We stir up our people *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, strength, soul and mind, and to wait for his Son Christ Jesus, who is the hope of glory, and shall change our vile bodies into the likeness of his glorious Body.* And from this great motive do we press our people to the study *of holiness, with ut which they shall never see God.* We send them to the ten Commandments for the rule of their lives, whose exposition we chiefly take *from Christ's Sermon on the Mount*; neither can we be charged for having taught the People, to break one of the least of these Commandments. We exhort all our hearers to make the life of Christ the pattern of theirs, and to learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart; neither can our Church be accused of having taught any Carnal Doctrines, for gratifying the base Interests of the flesh, or for ingrossing the power or treasure of the World, the subsistence of our Church-men being but a livelyhood, and not a treasure. In a word, *we preach Christ and him Crucified*, and all the rules of his Gospel, for ordering the conversation aright, without adding, or taking from it; and thus our conformity to the third branch of Christianity appears.

We teach also according to the fourth branch of Christianity, the Doctrines of Charity; neither do we condemn any who hold the foundation, though in some lesser matters they differ from us, but hope they may be saved as well as we. We abhor the Doctrine of cruel persecuting of any for their Consciences: The outmost we allow of, or desire of that nature, being the preservation

tion of our own Societies pure from the contagion of other Traffiquers, and the driving from us thoſe who do ſo diſturb us. All the authority we give the Church, is Paternal, and not Tyrannical; our Church-men we hold to be the Paſtors, but not the Lords of the Flock, who are obliged to feed them ſincerely, both by their Doctrine, Labours, and whole Converſation; but we pretend to no blind obedience due to their directions; and count them noble Chriſtians, who ſearch and try all they ſay by that Teſt of the Scriptures: We ſend the People to confeſs their ſins to God, from whom only we teach them to expect their pardon; and pretend to no other keys, but Miniſterial ones, over publick and known Scandals. In our Worſhip, as all do underſtand it, ſo every one may joyn in it. And in the number, uſe, and ſimplicity of our Sacraments, we have religiouſly adhered to the Rules of the Goſpel, we holding them to be ſolemn federal Rites of our Stipulation with God; in which, if we do worthily partake of them, we are aſſured of the Preſence of the Divine Spirit and Grace, for uniting our Souls more intirely to God, and advancing us in all the ways of the Spirit of Life; and if the Inſtitution of them in the Goſpel, be compared with our Adminiſtration of them, it will appear how cloſe we have kept to our Rule.

And thus we ſee how exactly conform the Doctrine of our Church is to the whole Branches of the Chriſtian Deſign; upon which it is not to be doubted, but the Characters of the Chriſtian Religion will alſo fit ours: We found our Faith only on the Scriptures; and though we pay a great deal of venerable eſteem to the Churches of God during their purity, which continued above four Centuries, and ſo be very willing to be determined in Rituals and Matters that are external and indifferent, by their Opinions and Practices; yet our Faith ſettles only on the Word of God, and not on the Traditions of Men; neither do we believe every Spirit that pretends to Rapts and Viſions, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God or not; *and though an Angel ſhould preach to us another Goſpel, we would hold him accurſed.* The Miracles we truſt to, as the Proofs of the Truth of that Revelation which we believe, are only thoſe contained in the Scriptures; and though we believe there was a wonder working power continued for ſome time in the Church, yet we make a great difference betwixt what we hiſtorically credit, and what we religiouſly believe; neither will we, for ſupporting our Intereſt or Authority, have recourſe to that baſe

baſe trade of forging lying Wonders, but we reſt ſatisfied with the Miracles Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought for the proof of the Religion we own; ſince what we believe, is no other than what they taught; and therefore we leave the trade of forging new Miracles, to them who have forged a new Religion.

And for the plain genuines of the Goſpel, we have not departed a ſtep from it, ſince we call upon our People by all the motives we can deviſe, and with all the earneſtneſs we are Maſters of, to receive full and clear Inſtruction in all the Matters of our Religion, which we diſtinctly lay open to them. And nothing of Intereſt or Deſign can be charged on us, who pretend to nothing but to be the *Stewards of the Myſteries of God*; nor have we offered to ſophiſticate the ſimplicity of our Worſhip by any additions to it; for the determining about ſome particular forms is no addition to Worſhip, but only the following forth of theſe Precepts of doing all things to edification, peace, and order: But an addition to Worſhip is, when any new piece of Divine Service is invented, with a pretence of our being more acceptable to God thereby, or of our receiving Grace by that conveyance; and therefore any Rites we have, as they are not without ſome hints from Scripture, ſo we pretend not to become any way acceptable to God by them.

Further, We teach no irrational nor unconceivable Doctrine: It is true there are Myſteries in our Faith, and even reaſon it ſelf teacheth, that theſe muſt be unconceivable; but for all our other perſuaſions, they are ſuch as may be well made out to the rational faculties of Man; therefore we do not betake our ſelves to that Sanctuary, that we muſt be believed, aſſert what we pleaſe; but we aſſert nothing but what we offer to evince by the cleareſt proofs. And in fine, we add nothing to the burdenſomneſs of the Laws of Chriſt, but teach and propoſe them as we have them from his Goſpel, without adding, changing, or altering a tittle from the firſt Inſtitution.

And ſo far have I conſidered the Doctrine and Worſhip of our Church; wherein if I could juſtify all our *Practices*, as well as I can do our *Principles*, there were no grounds to fear hurt from all the Cavils of Mortals. But for bad practices, whatſoever matter of regrate they may furniſh us with, they afford none for ſeparation: Therefore there is no ground that can juſtify a ſeparation from our Church, much leſs warrant the turning over

 from

from us to the Communion of *Rome*: And thus far have I purſued my deſigned Enquiry, which was, if with a ſafe Conſcience any might adjoin themſelves to the Popiſh Religion, or if Communion with our Church was to be kept and continued in; and have found great grounds to aſſert the evident hazards of the former, ſo that no man to whom his ſalvation and welfare is dear, can, or ought to joyn himſelf to that Church; on the other hand, without renting the Body of Chriſt, none can, or ought to depart from our Churches: But I leave the peruſal and conſidering of theſe things to the ſerious Reader, to whom I hope they may give ſome ſatisfaction, if he bring with him to the Enquiry an attentive, ſerious, and unbyaſſed mind. And I leave the ſucceſs of this, and every other attempt of this nature, for the clearing of Divine truth, with him who is the only Fountain of Bleſſings, who is over all, God bleſſed for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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